CATHOLIC ACTION

THEORY AND PRACTICE

BY

The Most Revd.

DR. LOUIS MATHIAS, S.D.B., D.D.,

ARCHBISHOP OF MADRAS

PRINTED AT
[illegible]UXLEY PRESS, MADRAS
[illegible]

G62
N52
2722

CATHOLIC ACTION

THEORY AND PRACTICE

BY

The Most Revd.

DR. LOUIS MATHIAS, S.D.B., D.D.,

ARCHBISHOP OF MADRAS

PRINTED AT

THE HUXLEY PRESS, MADRAS

1952

NADU ARCHIVES LIBRARY
20722

PREFACE

This manual was prepared at the request of several Ordinaries who were anxious to give to the Clergy and laity of their respective dioceses, a guide showing what Catholic Action is (theory) and how it can be established in the dioceses and parishes (practice).

The manual is divided into three parts which deal respectively with:

(1) the Nature of Catholic Action;

(2) its Organisation; and

(3) its Practical Realization.

In presenting the matter to the readers our main preoccupation has always been to give the Holy Father's own thoughts on the subject. Hence, we have quoted, as often as possible, the very words of the Pontifical pronouncements so as to let the Pope of Catholic Action, Pius XI speak for himself.

As no special Encyclical has been written on Catholic Action — except the one addressed to the Italian Hierarchy — we have searched the numerous statements and pronouncements of Pius XI and quoted them at considerable length. They are a mine of precious teaching on the subject.

We dare say that the pronouncements of few Popes will be studied as those of Pius XI will be, with regard to Catholic Action, the powerful Crusade launched for the renovation of modern society. Pius XII has never lost an occasion to re-echo the doctrine of his predecessor on Catholic Action and so we have quoted him often too.

The Theology of Catholic Action has still to find its Thomas of Aquinas. We feel sure that such a movement which has had its inspirer in Pius XI will one day — and we hope soon — find its singer and its doctor.

This manual was prepared in the midst of the many and various occupations and preoccupations inherent in our Office. Interruptions have often impeded the continuity of thought and have been the cause of repetitions. We are aware of all these deficiencies and we ask the readers to bear with the shortcomings they will surely discover in this book and send us their corrections and suggestions so that we may bring out an improved edition in case this first draft meets with the favour of the public.

In fine we thank most cordially all those who have helped us with their advice and cooperation in the compilation of this manual.

Madras: Feast of St. Mathias — 1952.

CONTENTS

PREFACE iii

Part I

THE NATURE OF CATHOLIC ACTION

CHAPTER I—CATHOLIC ACTION DEFINED

A Technical Term — The Four Essential Characteristics of C.A. — Participation — Collaboration — The Laity — An Organized Body — Organized Lay-Apostolate — The Laity must breathe the Apostolic Spirit — Religious Apostolate — Catholic Action and Politics — Under the Mandate of Hierarchy — Dependence on the Church's Hierarchy — The Ecclesiastical Assistants, delegates of the Hierarchy — The Definition of Catholic Action. 1

CHAPTER II—THE ORIGIN AND THE PURPOSE OF CATHOLIC ACTION

The Origin of Catholic Action — The Popes and Catholic Action (Pius IX; Leo XIII; Pius X; Benedict XV; Pius XI; Pius XII) — The Sources (Theologically; Canonically) — The Programme of Catholic Action — The Work of Restoration — The Aim of Catholic Action — The Spirit of Catholic Action — Our Personal Effort. 17

CHAPTER III—THE OBLIGATION OF CATHOLIC ACTION

Catholic Action is a duty (On the Clergy; On the Laity) — Catholic Action a Vocation — The reasons for such a duty (Charity and gratitude; The present condition of Society; The inadequacy of the clergy; The vastness of the field; The specific advantages of a lay apostolate). 31

CHAPTER IV—IS CATHOLIC ACTION A MASS MOVEMENT?

The Mass — Numbers — The Elite. 45

CHAPTER V—THE TRAINING OF THE MEMBERS

The formation of the members — The formation in general — The formation in particular — Religious formation — Moral formation — Social formation — Apostolic formation — Technical formation — Recreational formation — Various Grades in the formation of the members — The Selection and Training of Leaders (The Selection; The Training) — How to train Leaders (Individual formation; Group formation) — Prerogatives of Leaders (Spirit of Leadership; Spirit of Responsibility; Spirit of Generosity). 51

CHAPTER VI—WHAT CATHOLIC ACTION IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT?

Works to be considered as activities of C.A. — Works or Activities which are Not Catholic Action. 65

Part II

THE ORGANIZATION OF CATHOLIC ACTION

CHAPTER I—CATHOLIC ACTION IS AN ORGANIZATION

Abstract Concept — Concrete Concept — Organization is a Necessity — Variety in its Organization. 73

CHAPTER II—VARIOUS METHODS OF CATHOLIC ACTION

The Italian Organization (The Encyclical of Catholic Action; The Organization of C.A. according to the Encyclical) — How it works: (In General; In the Parish; In the Diocese; At the National Centre) — The French Catholic Action Movement (How it works) — The Polish Catholic Action (How it works) — In Holland (The Grail; The Association of Catholic Young Women) — Catholic Action in the United States of America (The National Council of Catholic Men; The National Council of Catholic Women; The Youth Department; The Department of Catholic Action Study) — The Belgian Association of Catholic Youth. 79

CHAPTER III—SPECIALIZED CATHOLIC ACTION

The Social Milieu — The Influence of the Milieu — The Principles of Catholic Action — A Model Experiment — The Enquiry Method — The J.O.C. is a School — Pius XII and the J.O.C. 98

CHAPTER IV—THE STUDY CIRCLE

The Principles of Study Circles (The necessity of a technique; Modern apostolate and modern technique; Study Circles and Catholic Action; An aid to religious ignorance; Need of deeper Religious Study; Need of conviction; Gutta cavat lapidem; The elite and our duty) — The Method of Conducting Study Circles (Order of the Meeting; Some explanation on the order proposed above: The Opening Prayer, Roll Call, Minutes of the Previous Meeting, Religious Formation (Study of the New Testament, Living the Sacred Liturgy), The Reading and the Development of the chosen theme) — The Choice of the Subject — Preparation of the Subject — The Presentation of the Subject — The complete exposition of the subject first, followed thereafter by discussions or exchange of views — The doctrinal exposition mixed with the exchange of views — Socratic method — The Enquiry Method — Other methods (The question and answer; The commentary of a passage of a book or an article; The use of a picture; The questionnaire; The Question Box; The analysis of a book or novel) — Number of meetings — Length of the meetings — Time — The Place — Miscellaneous — The Closing Prayer. 115

CHAPTER V—CATHOLIC ACTION THROUGH COORDINATION

The Existing Associations — Relation of Catholic Action with other Associations — Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary — The Legion of Mary — The Official Mandate — What Coordination means — Parochial Boards and Diocesan Councils (Parochial Boards; The Diocesan Council) — Coordination and Unity of Action. 138

CHAPTER VI—CATHOLIC ACTION AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

The Cooperation of Religious Orders and Congregations — Catholic Action and Schools and Colleges — How to Organise Catholic Action in Schools and Colleges — Centres of Catholic Action for Young Students — University Students — What about Schools and Institutions for Girls — The Contemplative Orders — Let us Conclude. 153

Part III

CATHOLIC ACTION IN PRACTICE

CHAPTER I—THE PRACTICAL REALIZATION OF CATHOLIC ACTION

A General Remark — Preliminary Knowledge — The Second Step — A Separate Organization — Catholic Action Boards — Parochial Board — The Diocesan Board — Specialised Catholic Action — The Best Method — How to start organizing Catholic Action Groups. 167

CHAPTER II—THE DIRECTIVE ORGANS OF CATHOLIC ACTION

Office Bearers — The Ecclesiastical Assistant. .. 176

CHAPTER III—MANNER OF CONDUCTING THE MEETINGS

The Purpose of the Meetings — Various kinds of Meetings (National Meetings; Inter-Diocesan and Diocesan Meetings; The Diocesan Executive Council and the Diocesan Council Meetings; The Parochial Executive Committee and Parochial Board Meetings; General Meetings of various Parishes or Associations) — Length of meetings — Time of the meetings — Place of the meetings — The Get-up of the meeting place — Order of the meetings. 182

CHAPTER IV—THE INSIGNIA, THE PATRON SAINT AND THE FEAST OF C.A.

I. The Emblems of Catholic Action (The Badge; The Banner; The Enrolment Card) — II. The Patron Saints and the Principal Feast of Catholic Action — Conclusion. .. 190

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I—DRAFTS OF STATUTES FOR THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL AND PAROCHIAL BOARDS OF CATHOLIC ACTION AND STUDY CIRCLES

A. Statutes for the Diocesan Council of Catholic Action:

Creation of the Council — Its nature and end — Its objects — Means to attain these objects — Its Members — Office-bearers — The Ecclesiastical Assistant — The President — The Secretary — The Treasurer — The Councillors — Terms of Office — Meetings — Time and place of the meetings — The Motto of the Association — The Badge — The Banner — Funds — The Organ — The Statutes.

B. Statutes for the Parochial Boards of Catholic Action:

Erection — Aim and Objects — Ways and Means to attain these objects — Members — Office-bearers — The Ecclesiastical Assistants — The President — The Secretary and Treasurer — The Councillors — Term of Office — Meetings — Time Limit for the meetings — Enrolment cards and fees — The Motto of the Association — The Pledge — The Badge — The Banner — Funds — The Organs — The Statutes.

C. Statutes for Study Circles:

Aim — Members — Admission of members — Subscription — Meetings (Weekly; Length; Time; Place) — Subject for Discussion — Agenda — Office-Bearers — Functions of the Office-Bearers — The Ecclesiastical Assistant (The Leader; The Secretary; The Treasurer; The Librarian) — Nomination of Office-Bearers. 197

APPENDIX II—RITUAL TO FOLLOW AT THE MEETINGS

A. The Prayers:

At the beginning of the meeting — In the middle of the meeting — At the end of the meeting.

B. The Pledge. 233

APPENDIX III—INVESTITURE

Preliminaries — Order of the Ceremony .. 238

APPENDIX IV—THE BLESSING OF THE BANNER

Preliminaries — Order of the Ceremony .. 243

APPENDIX V—INDULGENCES FOR CATHOLIC ACTION MEETINGS

Partial — Plenary 245

PART I

THE NATURE OF CATHOLIC ACTION

CHAPTER I

CATHOLIC ACTION DEFINED

A Technical Term:

"The participation of the laity in the apostolate of the Hierarchy" constitutes what is known today as "Catholic Action".

'Catholic Action'* is a technical term: it is the literal translation of the Italian expression 'Azione Cattolica'. This term was first used in the time of Pius IX and has since been adopted by the Sovereign Pontiffs. Pius X referred to it clearly in some Encyclicals. Pius XI gave it a definite and special meaning in the classical definition given above. It is a condensed and short definition "but it contains many things, much meaning and all that is needed for a definition which to be such must contain, if possible, all the elements of the thing to be defined". (Pius XI).

As it is so condensed, it needs some explanation. The two words 'Catholic Action' used loosely might be misleading. Many in fact, not well acquainted with the technical meaning of the expression, wrongly believe that attending Mass on week days, taking part in a religious procession, reading a good book, doing a good deed, subscribing to a Catholic Paper or contributing to the Missions is 'Catholic Action'. Those are good works, *Catholic activities,* if we wish to call them so, but not

---

*It has been suggested to put an 'hyphen' between Catholic and Action (Catholic-Action). Although personally we favour the suggestion, we have not dared to do so, as the use of the hyphen has still to be explained well.

Catholic Action, because none of these works incorporate the four essential characteristics of Catholic Action.

The Four Essential Characteristics of Catholic Action:

Although theologians are still discussing the exact meaning of the definition and the inner nature of Catholic Action with its essential characteristics, from the classical definition given by Pius XI we infer that Catholic Action must be:

(1) action or work done by the laity;

(2) organized work;

(3) apostolic work; and

(4) done under a special mandate of the Bishop.

No work, no organization, however lofty its ideals and aims, can be called 'Catholic Action' unless it embraces these four essential characteristics. *Catholic Action must be an organized participation of the laity under the mandate of the Bishop for the work of the Apostolate.*

Participation: Before examining in detail each one of these characteristics we might explain what is meant by 'Participation'. The term 'Participation' by the laity in the apostolate of the Hierarchy, does not mean '*to be part of*' but '*to take part in*'. To participate in the Apostolate of the Hierarchy does not give to the laity a share in the authoritative or official powers of the Hierarchy for teaching, sanctifying and governing. The laity by cooperating in the apostolate of the Hierarchy does not become in the slightest degree a member of the Hierarchy. Though organized in the apostolate of Catholic Action, the laity will always be instructed,

sanctified and governed by the clergy and will not acquire any new right, but will be given the honour and privilege of participating in the work of salvation and redemption, i.e. in the apostolic mission of the Church.

'*Collaboration and Cooperation*' are also terms often used in regard to Catholic Action. In his Encyclical "Non abbiamo bisogno" (June 29, 1931) Pius XI uses both the expressions '*Participation and Collaboration*' thus seeming to regard the two formulas as practically equivalent. Pius XII prefers the word 'Collaboration' and expressly refers to his predecessor's use of this formula "Catholic Action, as our predecessor of holy memory, Pius XI, so often declared, is rightly defined: "the apostolate of the faithful, who give their *collaboration* to the Church and in some way assist Her in the fulfilment of Her pastoral task".

Summing up his impression of an audience granted to him by Pope Pius XII on November 17, 1947, Mgr. Dubourg, Archbishop of Besancon wrote in La Croix de Paris: "If the Holy Father prefers the term *collaboration* to that of *participation*, it is because it better marks the distinction between the action of the layman and that of the priest. The layman has a role of his own which must not be ignored or minimized. The collaboration of the layman is a real necessity". (See Clergy Monthly 8-1949, page 279 note 7).

Now that we have examined the terms 'participation' and 'collaboration' let us consider the various elements of the definition given above:

(i) *The laity* — Pius X in his Encyclical "Vehementer" of February 11th, 1906, wrote:

> "The Church, of its own nature is an *unequal* society, comprising two categories of persons, the shepherds and the flocks, that is, those who have their place in the various grades of the clergy and those in the multitude of the faithful. These categories are distinct from one another, in that the right and authority of moving and directing the members to the proper end of the society resides in the Hierarchy alone".

There are then in the Church of Christ two categories of members: the *clergy* and the *laity*. The clergy can be either secular or regular. To belong to the secular clergy, known also as the diocesan clergy, one must have received at least the Tonsure.

Religious are a special class. Those who have orders form the Regular clergy. Those who do not have orders (such as Sisters and Brothers) belong to the laity but are distinct from them by their religious profession which makes them members of an Institute recognized by the Church. The remaining members of the Church form the *laity*. In the field of Catholic Action, the Clergy guide, assist, control the movement, whilst the laity are the active members and they alone do the work. Catholic Action is specifically a movement, a work of the laity.

(2) *An Organized Body* — Catholic Action, as such, must be an organised institution. To be recognized as Catholic Action, any action or work of the laity must be performed by members belonging to an organised body possessing the four characteristics stated above. An action performed by a layman on his own initiative and independently of the body, cannot be called Catholic Action as intended by the definition. Private religious

initiatives are most welcome and are to be encouraged but they cannot be considered as Catholic Action because they are private, individual actions, not performed under the direction of the Hierarchy nor the result of an organised institution. If, for example, a layman gives an alms, or if he teaches Catechism to children on his own initiative, these good works are not Catholic Action. Catholic Action is a collective activity and hence needs unity and organisation.

> "It is beyond all doubt" declared Pius XI, "that individual activities can do much, and certain it is that no one would wish to hinder or oppose them, but it is certain too, that good, well-disciplined *organisation* alone will achieve *complete* success, and that it is only by the effective co-ordination of each one's efforts that results are obtained and effects produced that are as important as they are lasting". (To Catholic School and University students of Latin America, 1933).

(3) *Organized Lay Apostolate* — The end for which the laity organize themselves is to foster the Church's apostolate which constitutes the most characteristic and specific element of Catholic Action. Catholic Action is essentially the organised apostolate of the laity. Just as there is a priestly apostolate, so there is a lay apostolate which, as Pius XI says, has to be considered by the faithful as an essential duty of their Christian life with which the restoration of the Kingdom of Christ is indissolubly linked.

The Apostolate is a Christian duty incumbent on all Catholics, but to assume the form of Catholic Action it must be organised, that is to say, exercised according to

the rules or orders of an organised body under the mandate of the Bishop.

The laity must breathe the apostolic spirit — A Catholic Actionist must not only be a practising Christian, but he must also be a shining example of his faith and feel the need to see it lived fully by others. The Apostles did not content themselves with knowing Christ's doctrine, but went about teaching and spreading the Faith; thus they fulfilled their mission and verified the title of Apostles. In the same way, the members of Catholic Action must prove themselves to be Apostles intent on radiating Christ in their surroundings, manifesting Him wherever they go. They must christianize souls.

Catholic Action aims at the conquest of souls. It is essentially a missionary activity. Its purpose is to christianize those who are not yet of Christ and re-christianize those who have abandoned Him. It is not purely a work of prayer or an organisation for the defence of Christian principles or for the education of the people; it is also and primarily a work of conquest and reconquest of souls. "What we wish is that Christ should reign on earth as He does in heaven; and that His royalty over the world become once more effective" (Pius XI).

(A) *Religious Apostolate* — We have seen that Catholic Action is a lay apostolate; an organised apostolate. It is also essentially a religious apostolate. Pius XI said:

> "Catholic Action does not belong to the material but to the spiritual order; to the heavenly order

> not the earthly; to the religious order not to the political".

It is not a political organisation, nor a social movement aiming primarily at the material welfare of its members, but it is a spiritual movement which

> "belongs indissolubly to the restoration of the Kingdom of Christ, and the consolidation of that true peace which belongs to that Kingdom alone: Pax Christi in Regno Christi — The Peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ" (Pius XI — Ubi Arcano).

Christ has said that His Kingdom was not of this world. This, however, does not prevent the organisation from making use of means which although not purely religious are nevertheless apt to obtain the spiritual aim of Catholic Action such as cultural, educational and philanthropic activities, works of propaganda, and others of a similar nature.

(B) *Catholic Action and Politics* — This point comes to be treated here as a natural consequence of what we have just said. Without referring to other Pontiffs, it will suffice to quote Pius XI who on several occasions clearly defined the attitude of the Church and that of Catholic Action in regard to politics. Writing to the Patriarch of Lisbon (10-11-'33) the Holy Father stressed the non-political character of Catholic Action.

> "Catholic Action", said the Pope, "like the Church whose support it is, has a spiritual and not a material object. Like the Church too, it stands above and beyond all party politics, for it aims at the common good of souls rather than at the welfare of particular bodies. This it will achieve by extending the reign of Christ in the

> life of the individual, the home and society, by means of the ordered activity of all who offer themselves for the apostolate".

Catholic Action can never be and has never been a party or a party instrument.

> "Catholic Action arises and develops outside and above all political parties. It does not wish to take up the politics of a party or to be itself a political party" (Pius XI, 30th October, 1926).

To avoid suspicion and to show clearly what its attitude is, the leaders of Catholic Action should "not be leaders of political parties or ministers of political assemblies" (Card. Pacelli to the Archbishop of Prague, 30-11-1930).

Yet Catholic Action will try to make of its members exemplary citizens.

Writing to the Archbishop of Toledo (6-11-'29) Pius XI says:

> "While remaining above and beyond all politics, Catholic Action will, by its teaching and by the practice of those Christian principles which are the basis of society, form a body of exemplary citizens, zealous at once for the welfare not only of the Church but for the civil and domestic society as well". "Moreover", continues the Pope, "when religious or moral interests are at stake, Catholic Action can and must intervene directly and, by the full exercise of its strength, lead an organized campaign in favour of the paramount interests of the Church and of the souls entrusted to Her care".

When the enemies of the Church, making use of political intrigues, try to interfere in religious or moral matters,

> "when politics lay hands upon the altar, then religion and the Church, and the Pope who represents Her, not only are within their rights, but are doing their duty, if they give guidance and direction. Catholics have the right to demand these, and the duty to follow them" (Pius XI, 8-9-1924).

This happens when politics goes beyond its limits and prevents the Church from fulfilling her mission and from realising her divine plan. Then the Church, and hence Catholic Action must act fearlessly.

> "When political parties strike at Catholic interests and at the moral teaching of the Church, Catholic Action not only can, but must bring its influence to bear, without allowing its efforts to profit merely private individuals or parties; it must endeavour to further the Church's cause and the cause of souls, things intimately bound up with the public well-being" (Pius XI, 4-2-1931).

In doing so, we might be accused of being involved in politics. Indeed "there are moments when We", said Pius XI (19-9-1925),

> "the Episcopate and the Clergy seem to be occupied with politics, whilst actually we are concerned only with religion, with the defence of religion and of religious interests, when we fight for religious liberty, for the sanctity of the family and the school, for keeping holy the days consecrated to God. *This is not going in for politics.* It is politics that has touched religion and laid hands on the altar and we defend the altar".

Moreover, Catholics as private individuals and as citizens, not as members of Catholic Action "are not

precluded from taking an interest in public affairs or indeed in party politics when these conform with the laws of God and the Church" (Pius XI to the Archbishop of Toledo, 6-11-'29).

Pius XI is still more explicit when writing to the Patriarch of Lisbon (10-11-'33).

> "Catholic Action", says the Pope, "will not preclude individual Catholics (as citizens) from taking part in politics when these conform with the claims of God and His Church. Indeed in that event a participation becomes necessary, for it is the duty of everyone to further the welfare of the State to the extent of his ability. Therefore, without taking an active part in politics, Catholic Action has a duty of so imbuing its members with Christian principles that these foundations of all stability and happiness will guide their politics. Thus only will the reprehensible, but by no means rare, practice of behaving differently in public and private life be obviated."

We find these principles clearly summarised by the same Pontiff in his letter of 4th February 1931, to the Bishops of Argentine. Pius XI wrote to them:

> "Catholic Action will be careful not to involve itself in politics, for it is by its nature precluded from taking sides in civil government. This need not prevent individual Catholics from taking part in politics; indeed they are bound to do so in order to ensure a government conforming to Christian principles. So they will take an active part whenever party programmes conform with these principles.
>
> "While holding itself aloof from party politics, Catholic Action has a social obligation to make

> its members into what may be called a sacred militia, whose object will be the promotion and protection of the home, of society and of the Church. Nevertheless, when politics comes into conflict with faith or morals, it becomes the duty as well as the right of Catholic Action to exercise its influence for the safeguarding of souls and the defence of the Church, upon which the stability of society depends".

Cardinal Pacelli, then Secretary of State and today Pius XII, writing to the Archbishop of Milan (18th September 1925) said: "Though Catholic Action, of its very nature, must put itself above all rivalries of parties, it cannot, all the same, renounce the right and the duty, which is indeed essential to its aim, to watch, and to act, to the utmost of its powers and in conformity with the direction of the Holy See, for the protection of the common good and above all for moral and religious interests which are alike its basis and its crown".

In his letter to the Hierarchy of India on Catholic Action (30-1-1948) Pius XII says:

> "Having as its aim and purpose the promotion of the Kingdom of Christ, it is obvious that Catholic Action transcends the aims of political parties and provides an apostolate whereby Catholics, without restriction of age or sex or class or party, may promote whatever pertains to religion and morality".

It appears clearly from all these quotations that Catholic Action can never be and must never be a party or a party instrument. It arises and develops outside and above all political parties. It will be careful not to involve itself in politics, for it is by its nature precluded from taking sides in civil government. Nevertheless,

when politics comes into conflict with faith or morals, it becomes the duty as well as the right of Catholic Action to exercise its influence for the safeguarding of souls and the defence of the Church upon which the stability of society depends.

(4) *Under the Mandate of the Hierarchy* — Catholic Action, as we have explained above, is essentially a lay movement and as such its activities are presided over and directed by laymen. All the office-bearers of a Catholic Action organisation including the president himself are of the laity. This does not mean, however, that the organisation is independent of exterior control. On the contrary, it is subject to a superior authority outside its organisation; nay more, it exists only *because of a Mandate from the Hierarchy* which gives it its rules, exerts a certain external control and makes Catholic Action what it is. Canon Cardijn says: "*Externally*, if one may use the term, Catholic Action depends entirely on the papal and episcopal authority. *Internally*, within its own organisation, there exists a lay hierarchy".

(a) *Dependence on the Church's Hierarchy* — Catholic Action is an instrument in the hands of the Hierarchy for apostolic work. An instrument acts only under the direction, the motion and control of its agent. As an instrument in the hands of the Hierarchy, it is adaptable to any apostolic work which may even vary according to the circumstances of time and place.

Catholic Action would cease to be what it aims to be if it were not engrafted or incorporated into the Hierarchy. Its field is as wide as that of the apostolate of the Hierarchy and coincides with the aim of the

Church: "The peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ" (Pius XI).

Mgr. Civardi says that there is an organic bond between Catholic Action and the Hierarchy as there is between the arm and the body, between the branch of a tree and its trunk. Catholic Action is the *longa manus* of the Hierarchy, a lengthening of its arm.

Writing to the Primate of Poland (April 10th, 1929) Cardinal Gasparri, then Secretary of State, said: "From the nature and end of Catholic Action it necessarily follows that it should perfectly adhere and be docile to the Catholic Hierarchy, from which alone it can receive its mandate and its directive rules".

Cardinal Pacelli, now Pope Piux XII, in a letter written when Secretary of State, to the President of the Catholic Action of Italy (30th March, 1930) said: "Catholic Action being by its very nature co-ordinated with and subordinated to the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, receives in turn from the latter its mandate and directive rules".

In a speech delivered on 14th September 1925, Pius XI said:

> "Catholic Action must subordinate itself strictly to the Hierarchy, and this subordination displays itself in filial homage and obedience to the Bishop and the Pope, and through them to Christ: for the Hierarchical structure and the stability of the Church rests upon these three: the Bishops, the Pope and Jesus Christ". Some years later, (10th January, 1934) in another speech, the same Pontiff said: "Catholic Action is the action of the laity under the

> authority of the Bishop with the collaboration of the clergy".

Pius XII in his letter to the Hierarchy of India quoted above says:

> "In so far as such activity (Catholic Action) is a direct collaboration of the laity in the spiritual and pastoral work of the Church, clearly it must be subordinated to the authority of the Bishops whom, under the jurisdiction of the Vicar of Christ, 'the Holy Ghost hath placed to rule the Church of God' (Acts XX, 28) in their respective dioceses".

(b) *The Ecclesiastical Assistants, delegates of the Hierarchy* — The Hierarchy, the Pope and the Bishops, cannot be in all places at the same time and as their official mandate to the laity entails a certain control, they can exercise it only through their accredited delegates. To that end they will confide the duty of directing and controlling Catholic Action to their representatives called generally *Ecclesiastical Assistants.* These are the delegates of the Church who, in the name of the Bishop, assist the laity in their organised apostolate. Pius XI writing to the Bishops of Argentine (4th February 1931) said:

> "The Priests must guide the laity so that their action may not depart from the right road which it should pursue, and that it may ever, with due fidelity, respect the rules and directions of the Hierarchy".

In conclusion: There is an organic bond between Catholic Action and the Hierarchy, for Catholic Action is the longa manus of the Hierarchy. Catholic Action must subordinate itself strictly to the Hierarchy and

this subordination displays itself in filial homage to the Bishop and Pope, and through them to Christ. The Ecclesiastical Assistants delegated by the Hierarchy to represent them, must be the soul of the Association, the inspirers of the Apostolate, the representatives of the episcopal authority leaving nevertheless the direction and responsibility of the associations themselves to the laity. In Catholic Action the Ecclesiastical Assistants are only the assistants and guides of a movement of the laity.

The definition of Catholic Action — After having examined briefly the essential characteristics of Catholic Action condensed in the short, abstract, but classical definition given by Pope Pius XI, we must agree with the Holy Father that the definition was indeed given " after due thought and deliberation, one may even say not without divine inspiration ". (Pius XI to the Young Women's Section of Catholic Action of Italy, 19th March, 1927). Pius XI, the Pope of Catholic Action, deemed it his special duty to speak of and to insist on Catholic Action at every opportunity. Thus he has defined the movement on several occasions and has under a different wording always given the essence of it, its aim, the conditions and the field of action of this Institution so dear to his heart because " so dear to the Heart of Our Lord as is evident from the divine assistance so clearly shown in its favour ". For Pius XI Catholic Action was

> " the apostolate of the faithful who, under the direction of the Bishops give their service to the church and help her to achieve her pastoral ministry ". In other words, it is " the union of all the organised Catholic forces for the affirmation, diffusion, realisation and defence of

> Catholic principles, in the individual, family and social life, according to the teaching of the Church, the directions of the Holy See and in dependence on competent ecclesiastical authorities".

Writing to the President of the International Union of Catholic Women's League (30th July 1928) Pius XI defined Catholic Action as

> "the participation of the laity in the Hierarchic apostolate, for the defence of religious and moral principles, for the development of a wholesome and beneficent social action, under the guidance of the ecclesiastical Hierarchy, outside and above political parties, with the intention of restoring Catholic life in the family and in society".

If we wish to summarise all these various thoughts in one sentence we have the following complete and concrete definition of Catholic Action as an organisation. *Catholic Action is a properly and lawfully organised body instituted by the Church, mobilising all lay Catholics of good will of every age and state of life and of both sexes, who place themselves entirely and unreservedly under the direction of the Bishops, in order that they might assist in the apostolic mission of the Church, supplementing and complementing the work of the clergy by prayer, work and general devotedness for the restoration of the Kingdom of Christ in the individual, family, and society, above and beyond all party politics.*

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF CATHOLIC ACTION

The origin of Catholic Action:

The lay apostolate is as old as the Church. It may have lacked official organisation, but "from the apostolic age itself, it has always played a part in the most constant and fruitful traditions of the Church" (Pius XII to the Italian Hierarchy, January 25th, 1950).

> "In its essence, it is as old as the Church itself, but it has only come to be studied in all its fulness in recent times. It arises partly from the need which the Catholic Hierarchy always has for lay assistants in the promotion of the faith and partly from the desire of the faithful whose zeal prompts them to co-operate in the extension of the Reign of Christ" (Pius XI to Cardinal Segura).

> "Catholic Action is not a novelty of the present times. The apostles themselves began to lay its foundations, when in their journeys for spreading the Gospel, they asked the help of and the sharing in their fatigues by those lay people, men and women, magistrates and soldiers, young and old who had faithfully kept the words of life which had been announced to them in the name of God. This happened also in Rome, in those very places where Peter and Paul were asking all those of good-will to co-operate with them in their work and labours" (Pius XI to the Yugoslav Bishops, 18-3-1929).

But the Pope of Catholic Action was still more explicit when he addressed the Young Women's Associa-

tion of the Italian Catholic Action on the 19th March, 1927:

> "Catholic Action is not a pretty innovation of our own times, as some people imagine — people who are not disposed to accept it, or who do not like this 'pretty innovation'. It existed, and did so better than it does, and ever so long ago. The first diffusion of Christianity, here too in Rome, was achieved like that — was done by means of Catholic Action. How should it not be? What would the twelve have done — lost in the world's immensity — if they had not called out to others, men, women, the aged and the children, and said: 'Let us carry forth the treasure of heaven; help us to distribute it.' It is grand to read the historical evidence of this antiquity of Catholic Action! St. Paul ends his letters with a whole litany of names — a few priests, many layfolk, women included: 'Help the women that have laboured along with me in the Gospel' (Phil. IV 3). He seems to say: 'They belong to Catholic Action'."

Addressing the National Catholic Federation of France (12 June, 1929) the same Pontiff said:

> "Catholic Action is the revival and the continuation of what existed already in the very first days of Christianity and of the first proclamation of the Kingdom of Our Saviour. For proof of this, one has only to glance at the literature of the primitive Church, literature itself divinely inspired, to see what a great part of the marvellous success of the Apostolate was due to the co-operation of the laity with the Apostles. You know well some of the most illustrious names, Sebastian, Agnes, Tiburtius, Cecilia, Tarcisius, Nereus, Achilles and numberless others. Here are magistrates, soldiers, women and children

who come to the aid of the Apostles, who multiply their activity, giving them the means of entering everywhere, of making that work of penetration in every milieu, into the masses as well as into the palaces of the Caesars."

In his Encyclical, Evangelii Praecones (1951) Pope Pius XII exhorting the Laity to colloborate with the missionaries in the ranks of Catholic Action says:

"It can certainly be claimed that the lay co-operation which we today call Catholic Action, has existed since the foundation of the Church. Indeed the Apostles and other preachers of the Gospel received no small help from it, and because of it the Christian religion made great advances. Thus Apollo, Lydia, Priscilla and Philemon are mentioned by the Apostle of the Gentiles. We have his word to the Phillippians: 'Yes, and I ask thee who sharest the yoke so loyally, to take part with them; They have worked for the Gospel at my side, as much as Clement and those other fellow-labourers of mine, whose names are recorded in the book of life.'

"Likewise, as all know, the Gospel followed the great Roman roads and was spread, not only by Bishops and priests, but also by public officials, soldiers and private citizens. Thousands of Christian neophytes, whose names are today unknown, were filled with zeal to promote the new religion they had embraced. They endeavoured to prepare the way for the coming of the Gospel. That explains why, after about one hundred years, Christianity had penetrated into all the chief cities of the Roman Empire.

"St. Justin, Minucius Felix, Aristides, the consul Acilius Glaber, the patrician Flavius Clemens, St. Tarcisius, and countless holy

> martyrs of both sexes, who strengthened and enriched the growth of the Church by their labours and the shedding of their blood, can be called in some sort, the advance guard and forerunners of Catholic Action."

It suffices to study the first sixteen verses of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans to be convinced that the collaboration of the laity in the hierarchical apostolate of the Church existed at the very time of the Apostles.

The Popes and Catholic Action :

In the course of the centuries the Church has always made use of the laity. The technical term of 'Catholic Action' to denote this collaboration came to be used only in recent years.

Pius IX began to speak of the organised lay apostolate. He taught the necessity for courageous championship of the cause of Christ in a world that was daily losing hold of the things of God.

Leo XIII is the first, as Pope, to have used the expression 'Catholic Action'.

Pius X in his Encyclical on Christian Social Action (*Il fermo proposito* — 1905) laid down the fundamental principles which were to form the basis of Catholic Action.

Benedict XV in his allocutions speaks of the social task of Catholic Action and extols it as an effective means for a Christian revival.

Pius XI has the glory of having 'not without some inspiration' elucidated, in the classical definition, we have studied, the technical meaning of Catholic Action.

The Peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ through Catholic Action was the hope, the purpose and the supreme endeavour of his Pontificate. Thus he has deserved to be called and known as 'the Pope of Catholic Action'.

Pius XII was for nine years the close collaborator of the 'Pope of Catholic Action' as papal secretary of State. When he succeeded him on the throne of Peter he made it clear from the very beginning that he shared Pius XI's high appreciation of the role of the laity in the apostolate of the Church (See Catholic Action 3 — 1946, p. 73). Beginning with his first encyclical 'Summi Pontificatus' (1939) up to the last which has just appeared 'Evangelii Praecones' (1951) as well as in his various allocutions, rarely has Pius XII omitted to refer to Catholic Action. In a private audience given to Mgr. Dubourg quoted already before, His Holiness said: "Never was Catholic Action more indispensable than today. No one who knows our actions and words can be unaware of the place of honour We give it". (Clergy Monthly 8 — 1949, p. 279 note 7).

At no time in the history of the Church have the Popes insisted so much on the necessity of Catholic Action as in the last eighty years, since Pius IX began to speak of the organised laity. More and more from that day onwards have the Popes affirmed the role of the laity in the apostolate of the Church. Such insistence cannot be ignored.

The Sources:

(1) *Theologically* Catholic Action finds its source in the Sacrament of Baptism, and more especially in that

of Confirmation by which the faithful are made soldiers and champions of the Church. Listen to Pius XI :

> "It is the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation which impose, amongst other obligations, that of the apostolate, that is, the duty of spiritual help to our neighbour. By Confirmation we are made soldiers of Christ. Now this implies that the soldier should strive and fight, not so much for himself as for others.
>
> "But even Baptism, though it be less evident to the profane eye, imposes the duty of the apostolate, because through it we become members of the Church, which is the Mystical Body of Christ.
>
> "Amongst the members of this body, as of any other organism whatsoever, there must be solidarity of interests and reciprocal communications of life. 'So we, being many are one body in Christ, and every one members of another'. (Rom. XII. 5). Each must assist the other members. No one can remain inactive ; but each one while he receives, must also give.
>
> "Now every Christian receives the supernatural life which circulates in the veins of the Mystical Body of Christ — that abundant life which Christ Himself said He came to pour out upon the earth. 'I am come that you may have life and may have it more abundantly'. (John X. 10). So we must transmit it to others who do not possess it, or who possess it but sparingly or only in appearance.
>
> "When these fundamental truths of the faith are well weighed by the faithful, we do not doubt that a new spirit of the apostolate will fill their hearts and manifest itself in zealous action, since true life cannot be conceived

> without action, acting being not only a manifest but a necessary co-efficient and the very measure of life". (Pius XI to the Patriarch of Lisbon, 10-11-1933).

This theological foundation of the apostolate is also well exposed by Pius XII in the third part of the encyclical on the Mystical Body.

Through the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation we have the obligation of being apostles. The duty of helping our neighbour spiritually is incumbent on us as Members of the Mystical Body of Christ. We can rightly call Confirmation the Sacrament of Catholic Action for by it the faithful are made to strive and fight for themselves and for their brethren in Christ.

(2) *Canonically*: It is the mandate of the Ordinaries which gives canonical status and form to the apostolic zeal and endeavours of the faithful by juridically calling them to share in the priestly activities and organising them into Catholic Action Boards under determined names and statutes.

The Programme of Catholic Action:

The programme of Catholic Action has been outlined by Pius X. In his Encyclical 'Il fermo proposito', His Holiness said:

> "*To restore all things in Christ* has ever been the motto of the papacy; and it is especially ours, in the perilous times in which we live. To restore all things, not in any fashion, but in Christ; ....to restore in Christ not only what directly depends on the divine mission of the Church to conduct souls to God, but also, as We have explained, that which flows spontaneously from

this divine mission, namely, Christian civilization in each and every one of the elements which compose it.

"To dwell only on this last part of the desired restoration, you see well what support is given to the Church by those chosen bands of Catholics whose aim it is to unite all their forces in order to combat anti-Christian civilization by every just and lawful means, and to repair in every way the grievous disorders which flow from it; to reinstate Jesus Christ in the family, the school, society; to re-establish the principle that human authority represents that of God; to take intimately to heart the interests of the people, especially those of the working and agricultural classes, not only by the inculcation of religion, the only true source of comfort in the sorrows of life, but also by striving to dry their tears, to soothe their sufferings, and, by wise measures, to improve their economic conditions; to endeavour, consequently, to make public laws conformable to justice, to amend or suppress those which are not so; finally with a true Catholic spirit, to defend and support the rights of God in everything, and the no less sacred rights of the Church.

"All these works, of which Catholic laymen are the principal supporters and promoters, and whose form varies according to the special needs of each nation, and the particular circumstances of each country, constitute what is generally known by a distinctive, and surely a very noble name: 'Catholic Action or Action of Catholics'. This has always come to the aid of the Church, and the Church has always welcomed and blessed it, although it has acted in various ways in accordance with the age".

The Aim of Catholic Action:

The aim of Catholic Action is that of the Church. It includes everything which appertains to the Divine Mission of the Church. It is a world-embracing programme far larger and bigger than any programme of work of any other organisation. "The supreme end towards which all our efforts must converge, is to establish the human race under the rule of Our Lord, Jesus Christ". (Pius X, October 1903). It aims at changing and adjusting the world's religious, moral, social and economic thought in order to spread the Kingdom of Christ in the hearts of men. Its purpose is to establish 'the peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ'. We cannot do better than quote Pius XI, who, on the 29th June 1929 lucidly and forcibly described this new organised movement as

> "the Church working in society, championing good wherever it appears, and condemning evil and whoever may be its agent or whatever may be its sources. Its unrelenting spirit is that of the Church Herself, Her Decalogue, Her Gospel, Her eternal unchangeable and indestructible truth. Its plasticity is that of the Church, adjusting itself to every form of government.... to every kind of political organisation, to every type of social and civil life among various peoples. Catholic Action, on which our hope for the regeneration of the individual, the family, society and the whole world rests, is the Lay Apostolate supporting the Apostolate of the Bishops and Priests. It is the participation of the laity in the special mission of the Church. It is not, however, any kind of co-operation wherein the individual follows his own will, but only such service as is co-ordinated and united

with all the forces of Catholicism. Therefore Catholic Action will utilize the form of modern strategy, which sees in large armies, not an uncontrollable mass, but a detailed organisation of large and small bodies of troops, each entrusted with a definite task, but all directed by one authority, the general staff, for the purpose of defeating the enemy. Catholic Action must adopt this attitude of mind, so that in private and public life it can operate according to the viewpoint of Catholic teaching, meet the different needs of time and place, ascertain the position of the adversary, organise ways and means to combat it, enlist co-operation in the fight against it, give splendid example for imitation, and effect a constant progress for the Catholic crusade".

To Cardinal Bertram (13th Nov. 1929) the same Pontiff wrote:

"The supreme purpose of Catholic Action consists in the wide diffusion of the principles of the Faith and Christian Doctrine, in their active defence, and finally in their application in private, domestic and civil life".

Speaking to the Directors of Catholic Association of Rome (19th April, 1931) Pius XI said:

"The Hierarchical Apostolate and Catholic Action which co-operates with it, aim at realising the whole programme of the Divine Heart: the foundation, the extension, the establishment of the Kingdom of Christ in individual souls, in families, in societies, in all its possible expressions and ramifications, in all the depths that human activities can sound, when helped by the grace of God".

Pius XII, with the personal touch of his deep faith and ardent zeal, referring to Catholic Action in his

encyclicals and allocutions indicates some particular objectives of special importance and urgency as: the restoration and defence of the Christian family; the diffusion of the Catholic social doctrine which His Holiness considers at present as one of the primary objectives of Catholic Action; diffusion of Catholic doctrine and literature, especially on the social question, the State, education, marriage and the family; (Letter to the Polish Bishops, June 29th 1945; to the German Bishops, November 1st, 1944); the education of the people in the discharge of their civic duties and rights in the public life of the nation; assistance to the destitute and the importance of disseminating and defending the doctrines of the Church. (The delegates of the Italian Catholic Action — 1946).

The spirit of Catholic Action — It is that of a crusade having a clear and a definite aim, namely, to conquer the world for Christ. It is a spirit which must pervade all true Christians who love Christ and wish Him to be loved; it is a campaign which requires courage, energy and strength; it is a world-wide movement because it must move all souls and all things for Christ. It means that all must be permeated with the Catholic spirit. In brief, all must be truly Catholic, in thought, word and deed, in life and activity; at all times and in all places, in public and in private, with all one's mind and heart and will, one's soul and body, being everywhere a radiance of the spirit which characterizes the universal Church, the spirit of Christ.

As through the various anti-God movements in existence today, evil crusades have been started against God, the society, the family and the individual, so we

must start a crusade for Christ, His principles, His Church, His life, the Catholic life. It must be the crusade of truth against error, the crusade of faith against irreligion, the crusade of hope against materialism, the crusade of charity against the hatred of God, society and men, the crusade of justice and right against the exaggerated power of might and lawlessness, the crusade of sanctification against that of perversion brought about by the cinema, the press, an impious literature; the crusade of order against that of disorder, the crusade for Heaven against the gates of hell.

Leo XIII had already stressed the necessity of Catholics "countering today, press by press, school by school, associations by associations, action by action" (18-12-1892). Here is the Catholic movement, the Catholic Action to which all, without exception, are invited if they wish to deserve the privilege of being called the children of God, the followers of Christ, the true members of the Catholic Church, collaborators of Christ's Redemption. This common ideal of all, this combined movement of all, to sanctify oneself and one's neighbour, this action of permeating the whole world with Catholic faith and principles in the individual, family and social life, is Catholic Action. A beautiful ideal and programme indeed, which makes us instruments of God's salvific will, co-operators in the work of redemption, co-redeemers with Christ.

> "Let us not permit", says Pius XI, "the children of this world to seem wiser in their generation than us who by God's goodness are the children of light. We see how these men most shrewdly select and train resolute disciples who spread false doctrines everyday more

> widely amongst men of every station and of every clime. And when it becomes a question of attacking more vehemently the Church of Christ, we see them lay aside their material quarrels, link up harmoniously into a single battle-line, and strive with united forces towards this common aim...... Let all men of goodwill stand united!" (Quadragesimo Anno).

Commenting on the harm done by Freemasonry, Leo XIII wrote (April 20th, 1884):

> "Through an iniquitous alliance and a secret identity of aims, its adherents join everywhere together, grasp each other's hand and the one ever braves the other into new deeds of evil. So bold an attack demands a defence, that is, man should league himself with man in a vast society of action and prayer".

Pius XI sounded the same solemn warning when he said:

> "To our children, of every social rank and every nation, to every religious and lay organisation in the Church, we make another and more urgent appeal for *union*' (Divini Redemptoris).
>
> "What is necessary is an integration of forces, not scattered efforts; an ordered conspiring towards the common good, not a fortuitous concurrence of endeavour!" (Pius XI to the Brazilian Hierarchy, 27-10-1935).

Addressing the men of Italian Catholic Action (Sept. 7, 1947) Pope Pius XII said forcibly:

> "There is no time to be lost. The time for reflection and planning is past. Now is the time for action. Are you ready? The opposing fronts in the religious and moral spheres are

> becoming ever more clearly defined. The time of test is here. The hard contest of which St. Paul speaks is in progress. The hour calls for concentrated effort. Even a few seconds can decide victory".

Our Personal Effort — What a magnificent programme and what a privilege and honour for the laity to be associated in this spiritual conquest of the world and of souls for Christ, our King and Leader! Truly, all should be proud to be members of such a movement and thus become Apostles. It means, however, a great personal effort on our part combining the striving after personal sanctification with generous apostolic activity, for if we wish to benefit others by our action, we must possess sufficient reserves of spiritual energy to share with them, as "*nemo dat quod non habet — to give one must first possess*".

True, this calls for zeal, self-sacrifice, personal service and generosity. But are we not shamed into activity by our very enemies? How astonishing it is to see that the children of darkness display those qualities, oftentimes in a very high degree, for the spreading of error, whilst the children of light, the privileged children of God, stand by unconcerned, little or nowise inclined to make known the truth and righteousness of the Faith which is light coming from God and leading the way to God.

The Catholic laity must awake and rise as one body like an army in battle-array, for through the Sacrament of Confirmation they have become soldiers of Christ, pledged to defend His rights, and to safeguard His interests, and in this way realise the real purpose of Catholic Action: "Instaurare omnia in Christo".

CHAPTER III

THE OBLIGATION OF CATHOLIC ACTION

Catholic Action is a duty — From what we have said in the previous chapter, it follows logically that Catholic Action is a duty. "Modern times demand Catholic Action", said Pius X. Pius XI re-echoed this statement: "At the present time Catholic Action is almost as necessary as the priestly ministry" (Dec. 4, 1924).

Pius XII in his Apostolic Exhortation to the Italian Hierarchy (January 25, 1950) said:

> "It gives Us great pleasure to state once again how the well-ordered collaboration of the laity with the hierarchical apostolate — which from the apostolic age itself has always played a part in the most constant and fruitful traditions of the Church — is clearly in these days of special and urgent necessity and must be encouraged in every possible way.
>
> "Moreover, experience has made it very evident that the life of the Church needs to make use of all the energies and resources it can command. It has, besides, already given repeated and ample proof of the very valuable contribution which the laity can make to the efforts of the clergy to preserve in our own times the spiritual inheritance handed down by past generations and to spread among individuals and nations the light of the Gospel by methods suited to modern conditions."

Pius XI declaring that the apostolate was binding on both the clergy and the laity, though in different ways, has explicitly stated that:

> "Catholic Action must be considered by the priests as a definite part of their ministry and by the laity as a duty of Christian life". (Ubi Arcano).

Catholic Action is then incumbent on both the clergy and the laity. Both are the Church and both must have the interests of the Church at heart.

(1) *Duty of the Clergy*: "Clearly" wrote Pius XI,

> "without the whole-hearted assistance of the clergy, this work, (Catholic Action) though essentially the task of the laity, could neither begin nor progress nor bear fruit. It is the clergy who must so guide the laity that their footsteps may not stray from the narrow path of the authority entrusted to them by the Hierarchy, since they alone possess the Holy Orders which enable them to minister to spiritual needs and to form members of Catholic Action according to Christian principles". (To the Argentine Bishops)

Notwithstanding such pronouncements from the highest authority of the Church, the idea of lay apostolate still meets with much indifference if not hostility. It does not seem that the clergy in general have realized the urgent need of enlisting the collaboration of the laity for the apostolate itself. Too many priests have not yet realized this duty of theirs and "continue to carry on their ministry as if Catholic Action did not exist or as if it were not essential.

"Such Priests seem to have not yet got beyond a certain ecclesiology which, as Fr. Congar remarks, was constructed against Protestantism, Gallicanism and other similar errors and which in consequence was inevitably

one-sided; the laity was thought of chiefly in negative terms, lay-people being defined as those who lack all participation in the power of jurisdiction and of order; their function in the Church was almost reduced to that of receiving spiritual help from the clergy" (Clergy Monthly XIII, 297).

In his allocution to the new Cardinals (February 20, 1946) Pope Pius XII said that the Church cannot confine Herself to the privacy of the sanctuary. She has the Divine mission to collaborate in the building of human society.

> "Under this aspect, the faithful, and more precisely the *laity*, are in the front line of the Church's life. *Through them the Church is the vital principle of human society.* Accordingly, they, especially they, must have an ever clear sense not only of *belonging* to the Church but of *being* the Church — that is, the community of the faithful on earth under the guidance of the common Head, the Pope and of the Bishops in communion with him. *They are the Church*, and hence, from its earliest days, the faithful with the consent of their Bishops, have united in particular associations relating to the most diverse spheres of life......".

"The modern movement of Catholic Action", continues the Clergy monthly quoted above, "has no other purpose than to make the laity take their proper share in the life of the Church, thus using their immense influence for the extension and deepening of the Kingdom of Christ. During the last twenty-five years especially, the Sovereign Pontiffs have been tireless in their calls to Catholic Action, which they considered as an essen-

tial form of the Christian apostolate and an indispensable means for carrying out the divine mission of the Church".

A positive function has been assigned to the laity in the life and action of the Church and the priests cannot ignore it. They must believe in the laity and realize its role in the modern apostolate. They must believe in the vocation of the laity to real sanctity, for laymen and laywomen are called to sanctity as much as Priests and Religious are, though in a different way. They must acquire the vision of Pius XI, the vision of the world christianized from within through the collaboration of the laity. This requires a willing study on the part of the clergy of the aim, the necessity and immense possibilities of Catholic Action. His long experience had taught Pius XI that

> "in all countries the fate of Catholic Action lies in the hand of the clergy. The members of the clergy ought to know both the theory and the practice of this new form of apostolate which forms a part of the sacred ministry.... Priests — and we hope the same will apply to Religious — ought to consecrate themselves to this difficult work of the spiritual and practical preparation of the laity for Catholic Action".

The Holy Pontiff states definitely, as we have seen, that Catholic Action is a pastoral duty, for it is a part, a definite part of the sacred ministry. It is the form of the apostolate that corresponds best to the needs of the times, a necessity with which "is indissolubly linked the restoration of the Kingdom of Christ, and the establishment of that true peace which belongs uniquely to that reign" (Ubi Arcano). A great responsibility lies

on the part of the Clergy for they have the duty of manifesting to the laity their esteem for Catholic Action. Mgr. Civardi says in his manual: "As a rule, the inactivity of the clergy brings along with itself that also of the laity. And this is but natural. The moment that the faithful, well aware that it is the priest's duty to make use of every possible means of apostolate, see him leave to one side the conspicuous means that Catholic Action is, they cannot but persuade themselves that Catholic Action is either useless or harmful".

In his Apostolic Exhortation to the Italian Hierarchy (January 25, 1950) Pius XII forcibly wrote:

> "In view of the new increase hoped for in the forces that are active in the Church, We believe it to be a duty of Our apostolic ministry, once again with paternal insistence to stimulate the clergy who have the care of souls so that in every parish — from the most remote in the countryside or in the mountains to the great urban centres — there may be set up Catholic Action.
>
> "We do not consider that the very limited amount of territory or of population should be a sufficient motive for excusing the absence of these organizations. In the holy conquests of the Church, large numbers are not the deciding factor; rather is this found in the warmth of charity and in the conviction with which people believe in the effectiveness of loyal obedience and divine grace. In the wonderful harmony of the Catholic forces a few members in a small parish will undoubtedly make a most useful contribution, when their activities, though modest and limited, are the results of intelligent and fervent preparation, a filial respect for

the Hierarchy, a deep, generous devotion and a genuine spirit of sacrifice.

"At the same time, too, as they enrich the treasures of the Universal Church with their merits, the example of their lives will have unexpectedly efficacious results on the most lukewarm and even hostile people; for today, more than ever before, men are convinced not by words but by concrete, actual example of those who believe in Christ.

"This exhortation, Venerable Brethren, is addressed, as you observe, principally to Our beloved clergy, whom We wish to encourage in the arduous pastoral mission that is demanded by present needs; but it is addressed with equal paternal emphasis to those very lay folk whom We wish to see assembled in ever increasing numbers around their pastors".

Pope Pius XII calls at every opportunity, with impressive urgency, for the whole-hearted collaboration of the laity in the immense tasks that face the Church. In his broadcast to the Catholic Congress of Mainz (1948) he said:

"The task of the sacred ministry, today and tomorrow, will be impossible of accomplishment unless, in a still greater measure than in the past, the laity put their help at the disposal of the hierarchic apostolate. Pastoral experiences, in the troubled conditions of these last years, have precisely demonstrated how precious this help is and how often the priest, in spite of all his goodwill, is incapable of accomplishing his work without the collaboration of the lay-people".

Approving the new statutes of the Italian Catholic Action, he wished that his approbation should be consi-

dered by all as an encouragement given to the "collaboration of the laity with the hierarchic apostolate" and as "an invitation addressed to all good Catholics conscious of the needs of our time to give to the profession of their faith an active and militant character". He added:

> "Let the clergy see in Catholic Action the affirmation of the pressing need of creating among the laity, generous collaborators and the offer of a well-tried method for their formation and organisation".

The realisation of such a programme requires zeal and a spirit of sacrifice. This is why Pius XI writing to Mgr. Perdomo of Columbia presented Catholic Action as

> "a difficult task which requires great abnegation and self-immolation but well worthy of priests '*in sortem Domini Vocati*' — '*Called to the inheritance of the Lord*', and which with God's help will not fail to give them the greatest consolations in seeing, through their work the raising of new and perfect Christians, real soldiers of Christ, ready to fight the battles of God.
>
> "As a reward and as a sign still more precious of Divine pleasure, they will see also flourish among the youth they have brought nearer to the Heart of Christ, numerous ecclesiastical and religious vocations".

The duty of Catholic Action on the part of the Clergy is self-evident. It is the Clergy who must guide the footsteps of the laity and form members of Catholic Action according to Christian principles. A positive function has been assigned to the laity in the life and

action of the Church and the priests cannot ignore it. What a great progress Catholic Action would achieve if priests were to guide and instruct the laity as outlined so often by the Popes, especially by Pius XI and the gloriously reigning Pontiff Pius XII.

(2) *Duty of the laity*:

> "The union of the sons of the Church among themselves, of the faithful with the priests, of the faithful and the priests with the Bishops, of the faithful, the priests and the Bishops with the Supreme Pastor, constitute our strength". So wrote Pius X.

On the occasion of a peace treaty between England and Holland a medal was coined to commemorate the event. One side of the medal represented a pair of bulls united under one yoke, ploughing a rich field, with the following inscription around: 'Juncti valemus' — 'United we are strong'. The other side represented two vessels of clay on a stormy sea with the inscription: 'collidentes frangimur' — 'If we collide we break'. Mgr. Civardi, in an article, brings this example as a symbol for Catholic Action. It illustrates the old but always true proverb "Union is strength". It illustrates splendidly the words of Pius X we have just quoted.

It is only when the union between the clergy and the laity becomes a full reality that the world will feel the strength and power of Catholic Action. This Union will become effective when the full collaboration of the laity will be made use of. That mutual confidence and trust between the clergy and the laity will work marvels. When the laity will feel that they can, not only

be associated in the apostolate of the Church but that the lay apostolate is the necessary complement and auxiliary of the priestly apostolate, that they must collaborate with or participate in the hierarchic apostolate, then they will realize what Pius XI says in his first Encyclical, namely

> "that when they (the laity) united with their priests and their Bishops, participate in the work of the apostolate and of individual social redemption, then more than ever are they the 'chosen race', the 'holy people', the people of God extolled by St. Peter".

Pope Pius XII who knew so well the mind and the heart of his predecessor, writes in his Encyclical on the Mystical Body:

> "We desire that all, who claim the Church as their mother, should seriously consider that not only the sacred ministers and those who have consecrated themselves to God in the religious life, but the other members as well of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ have the *obligation* of working hard and constantly for the upbuilding and increase of this Body".

In this Encyclical, the Holy Father insists at least ten times on the obligation of all to work actively and to co-operate energetically not only for their own salvation but also for the salvation of others. Well did Bishop Fulton Sheen write: "The laity will become increasingly conscious of their role as they understand the role of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ. Christ in His life in the Church has no other hands with which to give bread to the poor than our hands; He has no other feet with which to visit the sick than our feet;

He has no other lips with which to speak truth than our lips; He is therefore incomplete without us, in the sense that St. Paul says the Church is 'His fulness'".

Acquiring, and afterwards fostering and developing in himself the Apostolic spirit, is the obligation of every Christian. Every Christian must be an Apostle. This is a logical consequence of the Doctrine of the Mystical Body. "If some of the laity" writes Jurgensmeier, in his book 'The Mystical Body of Christ' "hold aloof from the Church, showing a certain indifference and disinclination to exert themselves for Her life and interests, it is clear that they do not consider themselves members of the Mystical Body, upheld by its life and contributing towards its growth. It would indicate a complete misunderstanding of the real notion of the Church as a living organism, if such an attitude should become so universal that it would include those who desire to lead a pious life. Those members would not only fail to fulfill the mission entrusted to them by Christ, the Head, but they would also hinder the work of the Church; not as though the vital power of Christ in the Church were thereby impaired, but the members as His ministers, would not be doing their utmost to perpetuate the work of His Blessed Humanity in His Mystical prolongation upon the earth".

> "All are bound to collaborate in the work of establishing the royalty of Jesus Christ, since all are the happy subjects of this Sweet King" said Pius XI, addressing the Directors of the Apostleship of Prayer on 29th September 1927, and he added: "To dispense oneself from doing anything is a sin of omission, which, in certain circumstances, could be very grave".

Every Christian, then, must be an apostle since he is a member of the Mystical Body of Christ. Working together in collaboration with the Clergy, will he feel the strength and power of Catholic Action. The Laity have in their own sphere the strict *obligation* of working hard and constantly for the upholding and increase of the Mystical Body of Christ as the Clergy have in their own field.

Catholic Action a Vocation :

"The call to the laity in the hierarchic apostolate constitutes a *vocation* truly and properly so called" said Pius XI to the Director of Catholic Action of Rome (19-4-1931).

It is a matter of encouragement and pride for the laity to know that they have a task which they alone can perform. By the Sacrament of Confirmation they have been, so to say, ordained for the apostolate and by the contact they can establish with other laymen, they can, in many circumstances and needs, exercise an apostolate which the clergy cannot. This is why the same Pontiff rightly said that this lay movement was "indispensable, almost like the priestly office itself". In fact in some functions the laity cannot be replaced. The lay apostolate is as different from the priestly apostolate as the layman from the priest, but both are essential because the priests cannot do the work of the laymen and the lay apostles cannot do the work of the priests. It is a difference willed by God.

The reasons for such a duty — In a letter addressed to Cardinal Segura, Primate of Spain, on November 6th, 1929, Pope Pius XI wrote :

"You are well acquainted with the times in which we live and realize how great an effort is called for on the part of Catholics. On the one hand we see with sorrow the spectacle of a society which is becoming ever more pagan; in which the light of the Catholic Faith is dimmed; in which, as a consequence, the Christian sentiment and the purity and integrity of morals are vanishing in a way which is fearful to behold. On the other hand, we are saddened by the fact that the clergy, because in many places they are so few and because their beneficent influence has been lost in many sections of society which have been alienated from them, are unfortunately unable to cope with the needs and necessities of the times. *It is therefore necessary that all should become apostles.* It is imperative that the Catholic laity should not remain idle, but united with the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy and ready to obey its orders, should take part in this holy warfare. By the full dedication of itself to this work, by prayer and by a willing and active apostolate, *the laity must co-operate* in the work of rebuilding faith and reforming morals according to Christian principles."

We can thus summarize the reasons of such a duty:

(1) *Charity and gratitude*:

"Besides the motive of charity which is obligatory upon all men, the Christian apostolate is obligatory as an act of gratitude rendered to Jesus Christ" (Pius XI to the Argentine Bishops).

(2) *The present condition of Society* which is rapidly and progressively becoming pagan. Secularism, laicism, liberalism, state-worship, materialism or in one word, neo-paganism, all these errors have killed in men and society the sense of dependence on God and have

destroyed the concept of the sonship of God. They have turned men into materialists, anxious for the things of the world and indifferent or unconcerned about the things of Heaven. We witness an alarming decline in faith and morals which influences even Catholics who are not bad but whose knowledge of their faith is so little that they accept the code of the world as a necessary part of their private and public life. The Catholic laity must fight this spirit of neo-paganism.

(3) *The inadequacy of the clergy*: Priests, besides being unable to penetrate certain places where their presence would not be accepted, are too few and too busy.

> "As the apostolate of the twelve could not suffice for the task before it, so today, that of the Bishops, which is its continuation, requires to multiply its action; many hands, ears and lips; many hearts and wills are necessary to it". (Pius XI to the Directors of Catholic Action of Rome, April 19, 1931). The laity must supply this deficiency.

(4) *The vastness of the field*: The field of the apostolate is so vast and the works so varied that the priests cannot tackle them alone.

> "The constant charge over so vast a ministry has shown Us that the apostolate exercised by the laity must correspond to the latest changes in these matters, for, however zealous the clergy may be, their number cannot suffice for the large demands put upon them by present needs. They will therefore gather as many zealous layfolk as possible and enrol them in the ranks of Catholic Action to work at their

side in sowing the seeds of faith" (Pius XI to the Argentine Bishops).

(5) *The specific advantages of a lay apostolate*: The laity, working under the direction of the Hierarchy, can better meet the needs of the times; they can enter into many places where the priest would not be welcome; their influence will often prove more effective than that of the priest. They will exercise a salutary apostolate of like upon like. "The Priest cannot be everywhere and certain circles are closed to him. He cannot even give his own Catholics the solid instruction they so sorely need in the modern world; he cannot go after all his stray sheep. He is not present in the university, in the workshops, offices and drawing-rooms; he has no say in the trade unions, no influence on the magazines and books, on the cinema and radio — though these are the places and factors which mould the characters and shape the philosophy of life of people with a power against which our brief Sunday sermons or private contacts are ridiculously inadequate. Finally, the Parish Priest has little or no contact with the non-Catholics of his parish. Is he therefore excused, relieved of his pastoral responsibility? By no means." "Here precisely", added Pius XII in his allocution to the Parish Priests of Rome (February 6, 1951), "opens a wide field of work for the collaboration of the laity" (Clergy Monthly XV-218).

Let us conclude with the words of Pius XII addressed to the Indian Hierarchy (January 13, 1948):

> "With all our heart, therefore, we commend to the clergy and the laity committed to your care this admirable apostolate, which corresponds so effectively to the needs of the Church in these days".

CHAPTER IV

IS CATHOLIC ACTION A MASS MOVEMENT?

The Mass. We have seen in the previous chapter that Catholic Action is a duty of Christian life. This means that it is a duty incumbent on all Christians without exception. "It is necessary that *all* be Apostles" declared Pius XI.

The general aim of Catholic Action as regards members is *the mass.* This aim, however, is attained generally through the elite. As Christ in His mandate to the Apostles to "go and teach every creature" intended the christianization of all mankind through the work of a few, His chosen Apostles and disciples, so Catholic Action, which is the rechristianization of society, aims at the mass, through the help of an elite.

Let us consider first the mass. By definition Catholic Action is a mass movement, a movement in which *all the faithful* are enlisted for the success of the hierarchic apostolate.

> "Catholic Action should be a universal and harmonious action of *all* Catholics, without exception of age, sex, social status, culture or political tendencies". (Pius XI to Card. Bertram, November 13, 1928). For "whatever be their age, or whatever be the social class to which they belong, all the faithful are asked to cooperate. Youth and adults of both sexes should be organized in its ranks by Catholic Action to achieve the greatest good". (Pius XI, February 14, 1934).
>
> "However true it is" said Pius XI to the University Students of Italian Catholic Action

> (Dec. 22, 1928) "that to begin an undertaking, a start must be made with small numbers — 'quality rather than quantity' — the time will come when its complete success depends on *mass* support, for the mass has its own importance, standing always in need of encouragement and direction. In the last analysis, the *mass alone is able to conquer the important and the permanent positions.*"
>
> "Number also has its importance" said Pius XI on another occasion "and that always, but more especially when there is a question of doing good, because number is the great multiplier; for, if to be few and good is already something, it is still far better to be many and good". (To Catholic Men — 15th April, 1928).

When, in 1925 Canon Cardijn, the founder of the Jocist movement, went to see His Holiness Pius XI and spoke to him of the Young Workers' Organisation, "At last" interrupted the Pope, "you have come to talk of the *mass*, and you do not confine yourself to a selected few". "Today", said the Pontiff to the Canon "number is strength". Addressing Catholic Youth on the 6th June, 1927, the Holy Father said: "We must persevere and increase, increase and develop; we must think first of all of quality but then also of quantity, because numbers will increase and multiply the good".

Numbers: Numbers — the enrolment of the vast mass of the faithful — must be the end and aim of Catholic Action, while the elite formed of militants and leaders, must be the means to win the mass, to win *all* to Christ. We cannot oppose the mass to the elite nor console ourselves as some do by saying that if we have lost the mass we have gained the elite.

Between the elite and the mass we cannot but choose the mass. If the elite centers round itself as a privileged caste and does not work for the moral and social uplift of the greater number of the mass, it has no meaning in *Catholic* Action. The elite is the servant of the mass and only as such has it a status in the movement. The Jocist manual says: "The elite exists only for the mass; only to influence the mass". Its motto must be 'compelle intrare'. "The militants filled with the spirit of Christ should direct themselves to the conquest of the mass, for number must be their aim" (Pius XI to Canon Cardijn, 22-12-1928). A mass movement, however, does not exclude the formation of an elite within its ranks, on the contrary it needs it.

The Elite: Pius XI who was much in favour of the mass knew very well also the importance of the elite. He realized the need of the elite to influence the mass and the necessity of forming this elite. In fact writing to the Bishops of Brazil, he said:

> "Above all we recommend that you show the greatest zeal in training those who wish to take their place in the ranks of Catholic Action. Religious, moral and social training are indispensable to whosoever thinks of doing efficient apostolic work in modern society. Precisely because of the absolute necessity of this training, it is indispensable to start not with great numbers but with small groups well trained, which, like the leaven of the Gospel, will transform the whole mass".

To rear a huge tree nothing more is needed at first than a tiny seed: in course of time the seed will sprout, grow up into a stalk, develop branch, leaf, blossom and

fruit. To get well-baked bread we need but a small quantity of leaven which slowly permeates the whole dough and gives us bread.

The organisation of Catholic Action must follow the same rule, the same process. Destined to grow into a big tree, it yet begins as a small seed; intending to raise the whole mass, its first care is to secure the leaven. The Communists who aim at the mass, at the whole world, have well realized this important point in their organisation. Their movement, which illustrates the urge for 'Action', starts with the cells, namely, the formation of numerous small nuclei. Slowly and steadily they grow and multiply. With such tactics their movement or organisation has in a short time expanded into a strong, powerful and menacing army.

The largest children's organisation in the world which before World War II numbered nearly four million members in Soviet Russia alone, started with those small cells of boys and girls and has since grown and multiplied like a giant bee-hive not indeed to supply the world with honey but to sting it into a frenzy.

Yes, indeed the children of darkness are more alert and active in overthrowing the kingdom of God than the children of light are in strengthening and extending it.

We thus find in nature and in the ways chosen by the enemies of God, an instructive example to follow in organising Catholic Action. Start with small nuclei; begin with a few; expand the cadre slowly and patiently. Gradually it will radiate and gather numbers and strength while losing none of its compactness; and ulti-

mately it will embrace the mass, which is its aim and which will be its strength. Quality is required at the beginning but quantity must be the end, for, as we have seen speaking of the aim of this movement, Catholic Action must restore *all* (men and things) in Christ, *all* have to become the happy subjects of our Sweet King, Jesus Christ. Just as at the beginning of the Church, a few apostles fired with the conquering spirit of Christ inflamed the whole world known to them, so it must be now again. Selected groups of inspired and energetic leaders marching in the vanguard and holding aloft the unfurled banner of the King of Kings are needed to electrify the mass and to bring it to Christ. Let there be but a few at the start, but let them be fired with dynamic enthusiasm and fervour. These ' fire-eaters " will communicate the flame of their burning hearts to others who are indifferent and cold, and set their environment ablaze with their devouring zeal. Slowly but surely their influence will spread throughout the length and breadth of the Catholic world making Christ the King and Master of *all*.

The policy of starting with a small number of volunteers and of increasing their number gradually has the approval of the Popes. His Holiness Pius XI in his letter to the Cardinal of Lisbon said:

> " While we foresee with great joy that many will hearken to the appeal of their pastors and enrol themselves in this apostolic army, We think it most advisable, especially in the early stages, that most attention should be paid rather to the quality than the number of the soldiers in that army of Christ, and that by means of diligent and thorough formation, which will not only be

> religious and moral, but apostolic, they will be rendered active and generous auxiliaries of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy".

Pius XII in his exhortation to the Italian Hierarchy (January 25, 1950) confirms what has been said:

> "In the holy conquests of the Church, large numbers are not the deciding factor, rather is this found in the warmth of charity and in the conviction with which people believe in the effectiveness of loyal obedience and divine grace. In the wonderful harmony of the Catholic forces a few members in a small parish will undoubtedly make a most useful contribution, when their activities, though modest and limited, are the results of intelligent and fervent preparation, a filial respect for the hierarchy, a deep, generous devotion and a genuine spirit of sacrifice".

CHAPTER V

THE TRAINING OF THE MEMBERS

I. *The Formation of the members :*

The formation of the members in Catholic Action is essential. In most places, Catholic Action lacks vitality because more attention has been paid to rapid expansion than to careful training.

> " The decisive element in Catholic Action, is *the person of the Christian,* deeply rooted in the faith and inspired by his faith " (Pius XII).
> " Give the first place to the formation of the interior spirit, without which all exterior action is futile and must be looked upon with suspicion " (Pius XII — letter on Marian Sodalities).

We cannot find greater authorities on this subject than Pius XI and Pius XII. We shall quote them at length on this important point.

A. *The Formation in general.*

Writing to the Catholic Youth Association of Belgium (16-8-1927) Pius XI said :

> " Catholic Action is an apostolate for which preparation must be made by a complete religious, moral and intellectual formation ".
> " Without this diligent and profound formation, the organisation of the individual Christian life and of Catholic Action is impossible. Without it all is dry and useless " (Pius XI to the Spanish Pilgrims 12-10-1933).

Addressing the Directors of the Catholic Action Associations of Rome on the 19th April 1931, Pius XI said:

> "Catholic Action must consist of two things: it must fall into two parts, not necessarily successive ones; two divisions, ideal and moral. A work of formation in any case: formation of intelligence, of will, of thoughts, of sentiments, of active initiatives, of truthfulness and sanctity. Catholic Action must have as preliminary the individual sanctification of each one of its members, so that the supernatural life abounds and super-abounds with them...... But after this first and formative element comes the second — the distribution of life, the action of the apostolate, which means putting into practice, in all its extension and in all its possibilities, the first apostolate of all, that of the twelve apostles".

The formation has, therefore, one might say, two phases which are, however, not necessarily successive, but which can go on contemporarily viz. a formative and an active action.

> "The object of Catholic Action will be achieved by infusing the members with the feeling and practice of Christian life and the result — a profound piety and an ever increasing familiarity with spiritual affairs — will ensure the practice of good principles, a zeal for souls and a close union with the Bishops as well as with the Vicar of Christ. The Association should devote both mind and energy to the formation of souls full of charity and good works ever eager to labour for the good of the Church and the State" (To Cardinal Segura, 6-11-1929).

Specifying things more clearly still, elsewhere the Holy Father insists:

> "The first task of Catholic Action will be to see to it, that in the organisation of youth, and if need be, also of adults, the religious, moral and social formation of the members be complete and solid, based on fervent piety, an outstanding probity of morals and a strong love for the Church and the sovereign Pontiff; for it would be useless to expect any efficacious and generous co-operation in the hierarchical apostolate from one who lives as a lukewarm Christian, or who is not convinced of the truth of the Faith enlightened by an ardent love for Our Saviour Jesus Christ and for the souls redeemed by His precious Blood".

In his countless allocutions, chiefly to groups of Catholic Action, Pius XII gives a whole programme for the "solid training of the faithful". This is well summarized in the review 'The Clergy Monthly' as follows: "Pius XII wants to stir up Christendom from its 'easy-going lethargy' to the full realization of the Christian vocation. He repeats the word of his predecessor: 'The greatness and difficulty of our times does not allow any true disciple of Christ to be satisfied with mediocrity.' He deplores the number of those who seem to take religion merely as an assurance against risks or as a system of practices to obtain favours from heaven, or who think themselves religious because they keep some conventional habits ('correct' Christians, empty routine, formalism) or have a certain superficial piety. He calls for 'real Catholics', 'hundred per cent Catholics', who 'have the courage to take their religion seriously', who realize that religion means self-

surrender and sacrifice, who understand the doctrine of 'the heroic life'. He keeps putting before the faithful the example of the early Christians; now as then, the Church needs witnesses more than apologists: now as then, to be faithful to Christ requires real heroism".

The exemplary Christian life was the great means of apostolate of the first Christians. Poor and ignorant, many of them slaves, they did not have many things to say but they lived great things. In the words of St. Cyprian: "Non multa loquimur, sed vivimus — We speak not much but live". Being convinced Christians, proud of their faith, they lived their faith. Their life was the reflection of their inner conviction. They knew they were to be the 'light' and the 'salt' of the earth. The light must shine and the salt that has lost its savour is worthless. Radiating Christ, they soon won for Him the pagan world. They were real apostles. What an example and what magnificent results!

B. *The formation in particular.*

Let us now come to the particular aspects of this formation in some way included in what we have said previously. These are:

(1) *Religious formation*: This implies a thorough knowledge of our Faith, of the Catholic doctrine, and a belief in it which turns into such a conviction that no objection, no argument will shake it. A perfect knowledge of our faith will bring with it its practice, for Christianity is not merely a doctrine to be believed but a life to be lived and lived intensely. When the mind and the heart are full of the knowledge of Christ and

His doctrine, to follow Him becomes easy and to live His life is a joy.

It is then of the utmost importance that the members of Catholic Action and especially those who have to be leaders should be thoroughly instructed in the Catholic Faith. They must know their Catechism well, read it over again and again to refresh their memory of it. They must read and study the Gospels and possibly each member should have a copy of the New Testament so as to be able to read it whenever he gets an opportunity to do so. To love the Gospel is to love Christ and to love Christ is to follow His teaching and thus be hundred per cent Christian.

(2) *Moral formation*: Once the intellect has been enlightened by the practical knowledge given in the teaching of Catholic doctrine, the will cannot but be disposed to follow the maxims learned therefrom. The doctrine must be lived and the will, prepared, directed and trained in the precepts of God and of His Church, will make the members practice these commandments not only in their private lives but in their public lives as well. In this way a reply will be given to the selfish and wrong doctrine of liberalism which has taught and still persists in its error, that Religion is a private affair and has no bearing on public life.

(3) *Social formation*: Man is an individual, but he is also a social being as a member of society and as such he has special duties. Liberalism here again has come with its false theory and has banned religion from social life. Religion has to be reintroduced into society and Catholic Actionists must play a great part in its re-

christianisation. Social formation means also that the members must be well acquainted with the social problems. This is a vital question. They must be told of the social encyclicals and the important pronouncements of the Popes on social reconstruction, the family, the youth and its education, the economic society, the state and international co-operation.

"The moral and social formation" says Canon Cardijn, "gives the members a clear view of the dangers to which young workers are exposed, excites a will for action, and builds up a lively and enthusiastic faith and confidence in the re-christianisation of workers for the good of the entire society".

(4) *Apostolic formation*: 'Apostolate' is one of the essential characteristics of Catholic Action and consequently its members must be trained in the apostolate and be imbued with an apostolic spirit.

Writing to the Superiors-General of Religious Communities regarding the training of the young men and women in Religious Institutions, Cardinal Pacelli, then Secretary of State, said:

> "The August Pontiff (Pius XI) has insistently declared on various occasions that training of youth in the apostolic spirit (the specific formation of Catholic Action) is an essential element of education in these modern times and a strong safeguard of the Christian life; it is moreover a specific grace for the youth to be called to an apostolate so closely associated with that of the priesthood. A wise educator cannot forget this; otherwise he would be limiting the horizons of good which should be widened before the generous souls of youth, he would deprive

> the Church of precious auxiliaries, and he would, with difficulty, attain all the aims of a truly Christian educator".

Catholic Action has, as we have seen, two phases: the first phase, the personal sanctification of its members, the second, the social sanctification, the apostolic spirit, which is the consequence of their being members of the Mystical Body. Enrolled in the lay priesthood as it were, the members have the obligations of working hard and constantly for the upbuilding and increase of the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ.

Personal sanctification makes the apostolate more efficacious. These two phases are complimentary but they must be achieved together. Hence Pius XI writing to the Hierarchy of the Philippines (1939) said:

> "One can therefore say with truth that in those who really love and practise Catholic Action, a whole and fervent Catholic life coincides perfectly with a life which is apostolically active, so that the same Christian life on the one hand grows and is made perfect in the individual and is, on the other, diffused abroad to other souls, in whom this life is imperfect or altogether extinguished".

(5) *Technical formation*: To love a thing, you must know it, and if it is a good thing the more you know it the more you love it. To love therefore Catholic Action and to be active members, Catholic Actionists and leaders in particular must acquire a good knowledge of the nature, aim, spirit and means as well as the activities and organic form of Catholic Action. They must know its programme and methods of action; its achievements as well as the possible difficulties they might en-

counter. They must study the conditions, the needs, and the opportunities of the country they live in, and everything else which will give them a thorough technical knowledge of Catholic Action as is suited to their time, place and circumstances.

(6) *Recreational formation*: This might seem superfluous but on the contrary it is very practical and must be part of the training. Youth gets easily tired of meetings which are often monotonous and they do not join willingly associations which do not combine the useful and the pleasant. The leader then must be trained in making the movement in his group or cell attractive and agreeable. He must be taught how to arrange for outings, entertainments, sports etc. He must know how to sing and teach his group religious hymns as well as popular songs. He must learn and find out also the means to attract an audience and keep it interested.

(7) *Various Grades in the formation of the members*: It is obvious that the same formation cannot be given to all the members. It must be in accordance with their age, sex, social condition, intellectual and moral capacity. The training in Catholic Action imparted to a section of students cannot be the same as that given to a group of mill workers or farmers. Formation must be specialized. It is the duty of the Ecclesiastical Assistants to see that adequate and appropriate instruction and formation be given according to the various groups to be trained.

A period of formation for members is essential. That period varies in length. It must not be hurried, for

members of Catholic Action — especially leaders — cannot be formed overnight. A shorter period of formation is needed for ordinary members but for the leaders or militants that period must be much longer. One expert in Catholic Action speaks of "something like three years" for the formation of leaders.

II. *The Selection and Training of Leaders.*

(i) *The Selection*: "A true Mass Movement" said Canon Cardijn "has much more need of a well trained elite than any movement of the elite so called, however apostolic or supernatural that work may be". If, as we have just seen, the formation of all the members of Catholic Action is necessary, the training of leaders or militants is much more important.

The selection of leaders is then the first step to be taken. Speaking of working men and of the need of apostles in their midst Pius XI addressing all the Bishops says:

> "It is especially your duty, Venerable Brethren, and that of your Clergy, to seek diligently, to select prudently and train suitably these lay apostles, among working men and among employers. No easy task is here imposed on the Clergy. Wherefore all candidates for the Sacred Priesthood must be adequately prepared to meet it by intense study of social matters. But it is particularly necessary that they whom you specially select and devote to this work should show themselves endowed with a keen sense of justice, ready to oppose with manly constancy, unjust claims and unjust actions; who avoid every extreme with consummate prudence and discretion; who are above all,

> thoroughly imbued with the charity of Christ, which alone has the power to incline men's hearts and will, firmly, yet gently to the laws of equity and justice. This course already productive of success in the past, we must follow now with alacrity". (Quadragesima Anno).

(ii) *The Training*: "Without able leaders" said Pius XI, "no association can live and prosper". Once selected, the militants must be trained. *A militant* must be a thorough Catholic. He must be so thoroughly instructed and trained as to be a convinced militant and only then will he be able to influence others and be a real leader.

Pius X in his encyclical 'Il Fermo Proposito' has traced the picture of the militant Catholic Actionist.

> "In order that (Catholic Action) be at the same time really efficient, it will be well to point out carefully the conditions it requires.... Before everything else people must be convinced that an instrument is useless if it is not suited to the work it has to do. Catholic Action....by proposing to restore all things to Christ, becomes a real apostolate for the honour and glory of Christ Himself. To carry it out rightly we must have divine grace, and the apostle receives none if he is not united to Christ. *Only when we have formed Jesus Christ within us shall we more easily be able to give Him back to the family and society.* All, therefore, who are called upon to direct, or who devote themselves to the promotion of the Catholic movement, ought to be Catholics who are proof against everything, firm in their faith, solidly instructed in Religious matter, truly submissive to the Church and especially to the Supreme Apostolic Chair and the Vicar of Jesus Christ on

> earth; they ought to be men of real piety, of manly virtue and of a life so chaste and stainless that they are an efficacious example to all".

Leo XIII had already mentioned the beauty of example which "has great effect in exerting healthy dispositions among the masses and it has increased force when it is the life of some *leading* man that is so adorned". (Graves de Communi).

Pius XII among the special means for the training of 'integral catholics' recommends particularly the habit of prayer and above all the Holy Eucharist.

> "An integral Catholic life supposes the state of grace and intimate union with God. Is it not the action of the Holy Ghost which in our days is visibly re-awakening within Christendom zeal for prayer and drawing the faithful to the Eucharistic fountains of grace?" (24-4-1943).

Trained and thoroughly instructed militants are a very important asset in Catholic Action. A militant Catholic Actionist must possess Divine Grace, and live united with God the source of all good and strength and consequently of success in the apostolate.

How to train Leaders:

The training of leaders requires intelligent and devoted care. It may be done in two ways:

(a) individual formation;
(b) group formation.

(a) *Individual formation*: When an Ecclesiastical Assistant has spotted a likely leader, he cultivates his friendship, talks to him informally but regularly and gently with prudence and patience and slowly makes

him realize that Christ wants him, that the Church needs him and that he must be ready to give himself entirely to Christ's cause. He must fill him with zeal, show him that the world is becoming more and more pagan, that priests are few and their influence lost in many quarters and that it is his task to bring Christ back to His rightful position in the world. When the leader has realized his mission, and his spiritual formation is assured, let the Ecclesiastical Assistant then teach him the principles of Catholic Action and put him at the head of a cell or a group. The rest will follow.

(b) *Group formation*: Pius XI in 'Quadragesimo Anno' earnestly exhorts

> "in the Lord the beloved sons who are chosen for this task, to devote themselves whole-heartedly to the formation of men entrusted to them. In the execution of this most priestly and apostolic work, let them make opportune use of the powerful resources of Christian training by instructing youth, by founding christian associations, by forming *study circles* on Christian lines".

The formation of members can be carried out by study circles, conferences, lecture courses, night schools, social weeks, Catholic Action Weeks and various other activities, undertaken for this purpose. The classical way, however, for the formation of leaders, is the so-called 'Cell Technique' or 'Enquiry Method' or 'Study Circle'. We shall speak of the 'Enquiry Method' in part II chapter III when dealing with 'specialized Catholic Action'. In another chapter we shall speak at length of 'the Study Circle', which seems to be one of the most appropriate methods for the formation of militant Catholic Actionists.

A three days' closed retreat should, however, always begin the work of formation. The spiritual training comprising regular devotional exercises must start with such a retreat to be sure of success with the blessing of Jesus Christ, Our true Leader.

(iii) *Prerogatives of Leaders*:

(a) *Spirit of Leadership*: The quality of leadership is most important. A member who has not the ability of leading the others cannot be selected as a leader. The name itself implies command, leadership. A person may have splendid moral and intellectual qualities, but if he lacks the driving power and the energy which will make him listened to and followed by the others, he must not be selected as a leader. A leader must command respect and admiration from those with whom he associates: he must have an influence over others so that they feel naturally inclined to follow him. Leaders are born and not made, but they can improve. A leader, who has not a complete religious, moral, social and technical formation may have piety, intelligence and knowledge but often they are not practical and cannot acquire the spirit of leadership in spite of their goodwill. The ideal is to find a leader who combines at the same time leadership and a real thorough Christian life. Should, however, a good leader not possess at the very beginning that amount of goodness required, we should not put him aside. What he does not possess at the start he will easily acquire if he is earnest in his work and well trained by the Ecclesiastical Assistant.

In selecting leaders there is no need of selecting necessarily the most gentle, pious, learned or the most

docile, sincere or popular among the youth or people we have. Those types of lay people should be chosen who seem to possess the spirit of leadership and who may easily be trained to become apostles in their surroundings, that is in the school, the office, the workshop, the factory, in the world in which they live.

(b) *Spirit of Responsibility*: The sense of duty, the consciousness of their responsibility must be inculcated on the leaders. They must realize their moral and social obligations as members of the Mystical Body of Christ, namely the duty to sanctify themselves and to labour for souls, to re-christianize a world turned pagan, to restore all things in Christ. Such a sense of duty and responsibility will give the leader constancy, courage and strength in performing his work. The spirit of responsibility makes a man reliable and all must rely on their leader and feel that they are in the hands of a man who knows his duty and whom they can trust. Such spirit gives power and influence to the leader and confidence to those who wish to follow him.

(c) *Spirit of Generosity*: A leader must give himself entirely to the cause he serves. He must give himself to Christ, to His cause, which is also our cause. He must give himself to others so as to win them the more easily to the cause. The zeal for the cause of Christ and of our brethren will naturally stir leaders to be generous. To save the world God Almighty gave His only Son and most generously Christ gave Himself, His blood, His life, to save mankind. Can we find a greater example of generosity? The Catholic Actionist, but above all the leader must bear in mind these examples and be ready to give himself most generously always and everywhere for the triumph of the cause of Christ.

CHAPTER VI

WHAT CATHOLIC ACTION IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT?

At this point we may distinguish more easily between works or activities which are really Catholic Action, in the strict sense of the word and those which are not.

"Catholic Action is concerned with everything that is either necessary or useful for the christianization, the re-christianization or the christian intensification of individuals, families and social movements and whole nations. Nothing that concerns the Hierarchy by reason of the mission that it has received is outside the vigilance and the zeal of Catholic Action. In all matters within the province of the Hierarchy, Catholic Action is to lend its assistance". (Lelotte: *Fundamental Principles of Catholic Action*).

Catholic Action can be considered, however, in the broad sense and in the strict sense.

In the broad sense, Catholic Action comprises all those works of which Catholic laymen are the main supporters and promoters and which are exercised with the approval of the Hierarchy, i.e. any individual or collective activity which has for its immediate or mediate aim the advent of the Kingdom of God in souls and in society.

In the narrow or strict sense, Catholic Action as we defined it, is "constituted by that organic whole of associations, in which the laity carry out every form of

apostolate for the assistance of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, and not only with its approbation, but at its special mandate and in direct dependence on it, and having rules decided on and sanctioned by its authority" (Civardi — Manual of Catholic Action). This last meaning is what is called official Catholic Action and it is in this sense that we use the term Catholic Action, except when the context shows that the term is to be taken in the broad sense. It is, however, rather difficult to draw a definite line and see immediately if a work or an activity belongs to Catholic Action in the strict sense or if it can be taken in the broad sense. There are, in fact, works and activities which are purely material and temporal today and which might be mixed with religious principles or morality tomorrow and owing to changed circumstances or new events, might fall — at least indirectly — under the province of the Hierarchy and hence also under the mission of Catholic Action. In general we may say with Pius XI (18th March, 1929) that "the field of Catholic Action is as wide as the Apostolate of the Hierarchy". But, to classify the activities which are Catholic Action and those which are not, we may give two general principles, leaving however, to Catholic Action always that elasticity which makes it adaptable to any apostolic work according to circumstances of time and of place.

(1) All works or activities which fall within the field or the mission of the apostolate of the Church can be considered as part of the work of Catholic Action (positive aspect).

(2) All "those things which have no place in the Church's apostolate, have no place in that of Catholic

Action" (negative aspect). (Lelotte: *Fundamental Principles of Catholic Action*). The Hierarchy is the only judge in case of conflict or doubt. For the sake of examples we shall give first a list of some of the activities which are considered as Catholic Action in the strict sense and secondly, a list of some of the personal or individual activities which, as such, cannot be the object of official Catholic Action.

1. *The following works are to be considered as activities of Catholic Action:*

(1) To co-operate with the clergy in any organised parochial or diocesan activity established by the Hierarchy, assisting them in their apostolic work of any kind.

(2) To be a member of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine and teach Catechism or gather children for the same.

As members of the Confraternity

(a) to impart religious instruction to children attending non-Catholic schools;

(b) to form religious study clubs;

(c) to inculcate in parents their duty of seeing to the religious instruction of their children;

(d) to arrange for religious or catechetical lectures;

(e) to distribute Catholic literature;

(f) to foster the Confraternity's aim;

(g) to help to organise retreats and missions.

(3) To be a member of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and as such :

(a) to attend Holy Mass frequently ;

(b) to serve at the Altar ;

(c) to receive Holy Communion frequently ;

(d) to make visits to the Blessed Sacrament ;

(e) to be exemplary in the acts of worship ;

(f) to enrol members in the Confraternity ;

(g) to arrange for :

(i) processions ;
(ii) Night Adorations ;
(iii) The Holy Hours ;
(iv) The Forty Hours Adoration ;
(v) The Guard of Honour.

(h) to take part in them ;

(i) to spread devotion to the Blessed Sacrament ;

(j) to help preparing children for their First Holy Communion ;

(k) to accompany the Priest when he brings the Holy Viaticum to the sick.

N.B.—We have given the example of these two confraternities as they are obligatory in every parish according to Canon 711 § 2.

(4) To be a member of the choir organised by the Parish Priest and to take part in the singing at all religious services.

(5) To be a member of the Altar Society either for the service at the Altar or for the upkeep of the Church and do all that is necessary for enhancing the divine worship.

(6) To be a member of the Sacred Heart Bureau established by the Bishop and as such:

(a) to foster the devotion to the Sacred Heart;

(b) to assist the Parish Priest in the enthronement of the Sacred Heart in all Homes.

(7) To join in the 'Legion of Decency' or similar institutions by counteracting the evil of secularism, ill-behaviour, the loss of moral sense, indecent fashion, immoral performances, drunkenness, pornography etc.

(8) To be members of any organised association or sodality established by the Bishop or recognised as such by the Church with an apostolic aim as:

(a) the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary as per the apostolic Constitution of Pius XII "Bis Saecularis".

(b) the Confraternity of the Holy Family for the Christian uplift of the family, peace and prosperity in the home.

(c) the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary for the spreading of the devotion towards the Blessed Virgin Mary, and to obtain

protection against the enemies of the Church.

(d) any organised lay association which has received from the Bishop the mandate ad hoc.

(9) To start Catholic Action cells for the spreading of Catholic Movements.

(10) To assist:

(a) in the establishment and organisation of:

(i) Catholic Action Summer School courses;

(ii) Social weeks or Social Sundays for the spreading of Christian Social Doctrine;

(iii) Social Guilds or other similar works.

(b) in spreading Catholic Social literature;

(c) in getting subscribers to Catholic Action Reviews;

(d) in spreading Christian culture and diffusing revealed truths and thus working for the extension of the Kingdom of God among individuals, families and society.

(11) To join any movement which aims at defending supporting with a truly Catholic spirit the right and the liberty of Christ, His Church and His Vicar, the Pope.

(12) To help and collaborate with the Church in the foundation and maintenance of Catholic Schools (Canon 1379) and to promote and defend the same.

(13) To propagate and defend Catholic principles and thought through the Press, especially the Catholic Press.

(14) To contribute to the christianization of laws, ordinances, public institutions etc. by propagating, applying and defending the principles of Christian faith and doctrine in the individual, social and domestic life.

The list could still continue, as the field of Catholic Action is the field of the apostolate of the Curch and embraces God, man, family and society.

II. *Works or Activities which are Not Catholic Action*:

(1) The activities of the clergy, like teaching, preaching, administering Sacraments and all other activities which cannot be performed by the laity.

(2) To be a member of any religious association or Catholic work, which although meant for the personal sanctification of its members has no apostolic aim or is not under the mandate of the Hierarchy.

(3) Any Catholic activity which is performed by a Catholic as an individual, personally and not as a member of any organised Catholic Action association as, for instance, the reading of good books, contributing financially to various societies (Propagation of the Faith,

Holy Childhood, Indigenous Clergy and other associations) going to Mass even daily for personal devotion, taking part privately in a religious procession, assisting at a public lecture on religious matters, even at a Catholic Action Conference, making a novena or performing similar individual practices however pious they may be. The collective work of Catholic Action is obviously far superior and more meritorious than private and individual religious activities although these also have their merit.

To gain the indulgences granted to Catholic Action organisations, one must be a member of some official Catholic Action association.

PART II

THE ORGANISATION OF CATHOLIC ACTION

CHAPTER I

CATHOLIC ACTION IS AN ORGANISATION

We may consider Catholic Action under a double aspect: first as an *abstract concept* and secondly as a *concrete organisation.*

The definition of Catholic Action which we have explained at the very beginning gives the *abstract* conception or idea of Catholic Action: "The participation of the laity in the Apostolate of the Hierarchy." But Catholic Action is also a *concrete* organisation.

In the words of Canon Cardijn it is:

(a) the conquest of the Laity;

(b) the re-christianisation of lay-life;

(c) the reconquest of the secular milieu.

And this

(1) through lay people;

(2) through a lay organisation;

(3) through a lay apostolate organised;

(4) under the direction and the authority of the Hierarchy.

"This organised lay apostolate constitutes the grand offensive effort of the Church. It is no longer a mere defence, but an offensive, general, methodical and disciplined for the conquest of all the milieux, for the revolutionising, the penetration and the transformation of every environment."

Organisation is a necessity of our days in all spheres of life. Modern business concerns show what success and profit can be achieved by methodical administration, direction and discipline. Industries succeed and grow because of their organisation. Similarly, to unite all minds and hearts, to direct all wills, and group all efforts so as to attain the apostolic aim of Catholic Action, a suitable organisation is of the utmost importance. No wonder this point is constantly and emphatically underlined in the Papal pronouncements.

In his fearless defence of Catholic Action in 'Non abbiamo bisogno', Pius XI clearly stated the necessity of organisation to reach the aim intended.

> "There is no sort of initiative, or activity from the more spiritual and scientific bodies to the more material and mechanical ones, which does not imply the necessity of organisation and of organised action."

Christ Jesus gave us the example.

> "He willed not only to train disciples in His doctrine, but to unite them into one society and surely bind them in one Body which is the Church." (Leo XIII, Sapientiae *Christianae*). A few lines earlier in the same document, Leo XIII had said: "The faithful would not, however, so completely and advantageously satisfy duties (of professing and spreading the faith) as is fitting they should, were they to enter the field as isolated champions of the faith."

Pius XI writing to the Cardinal of Lisbon (18-11-1933) said:

> "Agreement as to the plans and unity of purpose are as essential to the success of all enterprises

of Catholic Action as they are to the Church. Was it not the wish of Our Lord which He left as His last Will to His disciples, that they should stand united 'ut unum sint'? We make that wish ours and ask that in your country the clergy and the laity, disregarding all that might divide them in worldly things, be all united like one, in everything concerning the glory of God and the salvation of souls."

"The success of every society of men for whatever purpose it is formed is bound up with the harmony of the members in the interest of the common cause." (Benedict XV '*Ad beatissimi*', November 1914).

Organisation is a necessity.

In his letter to Cardinal Segura of Toledo, Pius XI says:

"Just as Catholic Action has its proper nature and its proper purposes, so it must have its own organisation, namely a unified, disciplined, co-ordinated organization of all Catholic forces, so that while everyone scrupulously attends to and executes the duties and functions confided to him, at the same time all will co-ordinate their efforts in just dependence on Ecclesiastical Authority."

Without organization there is no proper activity, no proper movement, no proper action. Take the example of the evil and pagan movements like, Communism, Fascism and Nazism. These owe their tremendous advance, progress and strength to their powerful and thorough organization. What they stand for is not merely a programme of action, or a movement, but they blossom out into an idea, a philosophy, an ideal, a reli-

gion, something powerfully dynamic and eliciting the utmost loyalty from their followers.

If we have been really impressed by the rapid and mighty growth of these movements, we cannot but realize also the imperious necessity of an organised Catholic movement or action, to combat effectively all adverse forces. These forces capture the whole individual. The Catholic movement cannot be less comprehensive: it must mobilize the whole individual and the whole world. It spells a mighty organisation, ambitious as well as dynamic, and practicable withal provided it can secure the willing co-operation, collaboration, participation of all, clergy and laity alike.

Variety in its Organisation.

Addressing the Italian Catholic Action Youth (May 1950) Pius XII said:

> "Catholic Action is originally organised, like the Church herself, according to *dioceses* and parishes. This however does not prevent its further development beyond and above the restricted limits of the parish. It must be recognized that, despite the importance of the values and irreplaceable energies of the parish, the rapidly growing complexity of modern life may urgently demand a wider extension of Catholic Action. But even in this development it remains an apostolate of the laity under the bishop or his delegates.
>
> "The external and well disciplined organization of Catholic Action, so far from excluding, rather encourages *personal* thought and the spirit of *initiative*. In other words, it would be a wrong mentality if Catholic Action members

considered themselves lifeless wheels of a huge machine, unable to move until they are turned by the central force. Nor is it admissible to regard the leaders of Catholic Action as operators at the controls of an electric power station, intent only on starting or stopping, regulating or directing the current in the vast network. They must above all else exercise a *personal* moral influence, the normal result of the esteem and sympathy they will be able to win which will give credit to their suggestions, to their advice, to the authority of their experience."

True, there is only *one Catholic Action,* the universal and concerted action of all Catholics, all without exception of age or sex or social class, all working together for the same end, the triumph of Christ in the individual, the family and society.

But in its *practical application* there is room for diversity. It is evident that this organization should comprise various groups composed of boys and girls, men and women, and that it should adapt its methods according to the needs and circumstances of time, place and persons.

Let us again ask Pius XI to give us the right viewpoint. Writing to Cardinal Bertram the Holy Father said:

"The splendid object of Catholic Action can and must be achieved..... Inspired with this zeal the Catholics who take part in the apostolic work of the Hierarchy promote as their immediate object the unity of the faithful of all nations in all matters of faith and morals. Ultimately this unity brings about the diffusion,

application, and defence of Christian principles in public and in private life.

"Catholic Action should, therefore, be a universal action, a co-ordination of all Catholics regardless of age, sex, or social status, culture and even national or political inclination, provided these are not opposed to the laws of Christ and His Gospel. In short, it will be an action which will embrace the whole man, in his private and in his public life; it will assure him the best religious formation, i.e., an appreciation of his faith, a profound piety, a life of integrity, and all the virtues which form the necessary foundation for a participation in the apostolic work of the Hierarchy.

"It is evident that in its practical application Catholic Action must vary according to the diversity of age and sex or the conditions of time and place; nevertheless the formation of the young will be the primary consideration, while the adults, already prepared, will so spread their activities that nothing which forms part of the divine charge entrusted to the Church will be neglected."

There is not, then, a standard method of Catholic Action; hence its variety and adaptability.

CHAPTER II

VARIOUS METHODS OF CATHOLIC ACTION

Essentially immutable in its abstract form, Catholic Action is most adaptable and variable in its concrete form of organisation. Pope Pius X spoke thus:

> "Catholic Action, while suitably varying its outward forms and methods, remains ever the same in the principles which guide it, and in the very noble end at which it aims." (Il fermo proposito) And the Pope goes on to say that Catholic Action "has always come to the aid of the Church, and the Church has always welcomed and blessed it, although it has acted in various ways in accordance with the age."

It has worked, it will work, as it works now, adapting itself always to the circumstances and the needs of the place, time and people. In the quotation given in the previous Chapter Pius XI echoes the doctrine of his predecessor: "In its practical application Catholic Action must vary according to the diversity of age and sex or the conditions of time and place." Catholic Action has no standard method but adapts itself to all. The complexity of the problem of adaptation has given rise to interesting experiments and modifications in method and practice. Each country must study the type of Catholic Action which is most suitable to it. Each group, even in each country, must also make the same study. To copy in England what is good for France or vice-versa, to attempt at realizing in India what is successful in Belgium or elsewhere, may be profitable but it may also involve a risk if all is not carefully considered before hand and if the different conditions and

needs of the place are not sufficiently taken into account.

A false step at the beginning might be fatal. Catholic Action has been started in several countries and places, but in some, with little or no success. The reason of this may well be due to insufficient knowledge of the conditions and needs of the place or to the very wrong idea that what succeeds in one place must meet with the same success in all other places. In thus slavishly copying specialized methods without sufficient experience they started with the wrong method or in a wrong way. What wonder if they failed ? The methods of specialized Catholic Action so successful in Belgium and France (J.O.C. — J.O.C.F. etc.) of which we shall speak at length in the next chapter are not necessarily the best methods for India. Methods are means but not ends, and not all means are suitable always and everywhere.

It follows then, that before starting with any particular method here in India, we must study the conditions and evolve a method suited to India. As however, a preliminary study of the methods used elsewhere must be profitable, not to copy them, but to get from them useful lessons, we shall give in this chapter an idea of the various methods used in some countries for organising Catholic Action.* However different the conditions in India may be, the failure or success of

*As the reading of what follows in this chapter might prove a little tedious and monotonous, the reader could pass over immediately to the following chapters leaving this portion to be read at leisure.

Catholic Action movements elsewhere will be of help to us in organising Catholic Action here.

I. THE ITALIAN ORGANIZATION.

This organization which was set up by Pope Pius XI and was explained at greater length in one of the Papal Encyclicals, is closely built into the hierarchical organisation of the Church.

The Encyclical of Catholic Action.

On 29th June, 1931 His Holiness Pope Pius XI addressed to the Italian Hierarchy an Encyclical on Catholic Action. Although it was written in Italian and addressed to the Italian Bishops, it must be considered as addressed to the whole Catholic world and in fact it has been considered as the model for Catholic Action throughout the world.

The Organization of Catholic Action According to the Encyclical.

In Italy Catholic Action is organised on a basis of Parishes, Dioceses and the whole Nation. The parishes are units comprised under the Diocesan Catholic Action Board; the dioceses are units comprised under the Central National Board. Each unit comprises four main organizations, namely, (1) Men, (2) Young Men, (3) Women and (4) Young Women. University graduates and undergraduates (Men and Women-students) form two distinct groups. That makes in all six main branches which include also several sub-divisions of special categories. These groups, according to the

Statutes, include "all lay people who wish to work for the diffusion of Catholic principles and their realisation in the life of the individual, the family and society."

How it works:

1. *In general:* The four main groups (men, women, boys and girls) are organised in each parish. These groups divide their members into associations according to profession, trade or interests.

The University groups (men and women) are organised on a diocesan basis only. What goes under the name 'Committee of Organization' links up the parochial associations and the diocesan groups among themselves and unites them all under a Central Executive in Rome.

2. *In the Parish.* (1) Each single association is directed by a Committee with a Lay President and an Ecclesiastical Adviser, both appointed by the Bishop or the Parish Priest.

(2) Each group likewise has its committee which ensures solidarity among the particular associations. It has its president and Ecclesiastical Adviser both appointed by the Bishop.

(3) The four groups are linked together by a Central Parochial Committee composed of:

(a) the Presidents of the four parochial groups;

(b) a top President and an Ecclesiastical Adviser both nominated by the Bishop;

(c) four members chosen by the Parish Priest.

3. *In the Diocese.*

A. The Parochial groups linked together form the Diocesan groups which are directed by Diocesan Councils.

These consist of:

(a) a President and an Ecclesiastical Adviser nominated by the Bishop;

(b) Councillors chosen by the Presidents of the Diocesan groups.

B. The Central Diocesan Council controls the various Diocesan Councils. It is directly under the Bishop and the Central Executive.

It consists of:

(a) a President and an Ecclesiastical adviser.

(b) the Vice-Presidents of the Diocesan Groups.

(c) two Presidents of Diocesan and Parochial Committees.

The work of the Council is:

(a) to supervise the whole Catholic Action activity of the Diocese.

(b) to see that its decisions are duly carried out.

(c) to regulate the work of the Secretariat which is the parochial organ of the Council in the diocese.

4. *At the National Centre.* (1) *The Central Presidency* represents the organisation of the whole of Catholic Action throughout Italy. It consists of a lay

President and an Ecclesiastical Adviser nominated by the Pope.

(2) *The Central Executive Bureau* is set up by the Central Presidency. It depends directly upon the Holy Father. It consists of:

(a) the lay President and the Ecclesiastical Adviser already nominated by the Holy Father.

(b) a council composed of the six Presidents and the six Ecclesiastical Advisers of the six great groups of Catholic Action in Italy.

(c) a few Presidents of Central Diocesan Councils chosen by the Holy Father.

Its function is:

(a) to study in the light of the teaching of the Church and under the direction of the Holy Father all the problems connected with Catholic Action and to give directions.

(b) to co-ordinate and unite all the activities of the various organisations.

(c) to watch over the working of the various associations and to see that the direction of the Holy See and the Hierarchy are properly understood and faithfully carried out.

(d) to regulate all the activities of the associations so that no one exceeds the just limits of its scope, leaving, however, to each its autonomy.

The Secretaries: Each association has its secretary and treasurer taken from among laymen or women.

The Secretaries of the Central Executive Bureau carry on the work throughout the country; those of the Central Diocesan Council, carry on the work within the respective Dioceses.

The Ecclesiastical Adviser is the soul of the movement by giving to it that spiritual life which is the principle of its activity. He does not direct but guides. He selects the members, trains and moulds them into apostles of good.

II. *THE FRENCH CATHOLIC ACTION MOVEMENT.*

In France official Catholic Action is constituted by the co-ordination of the existing works with a view to organising the activities of all the Catholics thus securing the co-operation of all the laity in the apostolate of the Hierarchy.

How it works: There is a Central and General Council.

The Central Council consists of:

(a) an Ecclesiastical President called the General Secretary of the A.C.F. (Action Catholique Francaise)

(b) two assessors (One an ecclesiastic the other a layman).

(c) a General Procurator.

These office-bearers are appointed for three years by the Assembly of the Cardinals and Archbishops.

The Central Council is composed of three committees, namely:

(a) the religious and educational action committee whose president shall be an ecclesiastic.

(b) the civic action committee whose president shall be a lay-man.

(c) the social action committee whose president shall be a lay-man.

The General Council is composed of the members:

(a) of the Central Council.

(b) of the three Committees.

As in the Dioceses there exists already parochial unions and groups of men, women, boys and girls engaged in various religious activities, the French Catholic Action comprises:

(a) the parochial works under the direction of the Bishop and the Parish Priests.

(b) the works strictly diocesan under the direction of the Bishop or of his representative.

(c) the inter-diocesan works under the direction of the Hierarchy and the Central Council of the French Catholic Action Movement.

These works form three vertical and co-ordinated planes organising the whole of official Catholic Action in France.

III. *THE POLISH CATHOLIC ACTION.*

The task of Catholic Action is Poland (when conditions were favourable) consisted in establishing and grouping all Catholic Organisations with a view to an effective lay apostolate. These organisations retain their autonomy, but they must train their members for the

Apostolate, and make them take part in the works and demonstrations organised by Catholic Action and follow its guidance.

How it works: The National Centre is the Supreme Institute of Catholic Action established by the Hierarchy at Ponzan. It consists of:

(1) an Episcopal Commission; and

(2) a Supreme Council of Catholic Action.

The Episcopal Commission nominates for three years:

(1) the President of the Supreme Institute; and

(2) the Supreme Ecclesiastical Adviser with the right of veto.

The Supreme Council consists of:

(1) the President of the Supreme Institute;

(2) the Supreme Ecclesiastical Adviser;

(3) a delegate from each Diocesan Institute of Catholic Action;

(4) a delegate of the National Unions approved by the Hierarchy; and

(5) other prominent personalities invited by the Supreme Institute of Catholic Action.

The Diocesan Institute of Catholic Action is the Diocesan Centre. It is established by the Ordinary under whose jurisdiction it remains. It is divided into:

(1) Deanery Groups.

(2) Parochial Groups.

It consists of :

(a) a President ;

(b) a Secretary ;

(c) an Ecclesiastical Adviser with the right of veto. All three are nominated for three years by the Ordinary ;

(d) a delegate from each Diocesan union of Catholic Action approved by the Ordinary ;

(e) any other person chosen by the Ordinary.

The President of the Deanery or parochial groups is a prominent layman proposed by the Dean or the Parish Priest from among the Presidents of Catholic organizations and he is confirmed for three years by the Diocesan Institute of Catholic Action.

The Ecclesiastical Adviser of the Deanery group is the Dean and that of the Parochial group is the Parish Priest.

IV. *HOLLAND.*

There are two movements in Holland which have met with remarkable success. These movements are :

(1) The Grail in Northern Holland.

(2) The Association of Catholic Girls (K.J.V.) in Southern Holland.

1. *The Grail.* This organisation of young women which has been described as "a great army of young women with radiant faces", aims at developing the true spirit of Christian womanhood. Their model is Mary, the Mother of God.

They aspire by united efforts and activities suitable to women 'to conquer the world for Christ' which is their motto. The task of women is love and sacrifice, and the Grail train its members in these Christian virtues.

Lectures, courses, clubs of action are established with the purpose of developing particular supernatural virtues in gifted members. Besides the work of formation, there is also recreation. Religious chorals and dramatic plays are the outstanding features of the Grail. Originality of idea and beauty of form and movement are also cultivated.

The Organization is in the hands of the "Women of Nazareth", a religious association of lay people consecrated wholly and for life to the work of the apostolate, and practising religious obedience and the vow of chastity.

The association was originally intended for the conversion of non-Catholics. Its aim was changed by Bishop Aengenant whose life has been devoted to the organisation of Catholic girls of past school age for the formation of a Catholic Elite.

The Congregation has developed another branch of contemplative members who take the three religious vows and devote themselves by prayer and sacrifice to the conversion of Holland. These contemplatives train the "Marthas", the Ladies of the Grail who do the active work of the Movement. Thousands of girls enrolled as Leaders who get a six months special training are the helpers.

2. *The Association of Catholic Young Women (K.J.V.)*

This second movement was formed by Rev. Fr. Frencken, a secular priest. It focusses round 'the Eucharistic Crusade.' The Crusaders (who enlist not only small girls but grown-up ones too) practise daily Holy Communion and special devotion towards the Blessed Sacrament.

Thus spiritually armed and equipped, they take up work in factories, workshops and offices and through active charity and exemplary Christian life, they try to influence their fellow workers. Cells or Clubs are formed of a few members. Those clubs meet in the Crusade House at the head of which there are the Crusade Catechists who form a kind of lay congregation under the jurisdiction of the Bishops. Girls of every class take active part in this very successful movement.

V. *CATHOLIC ACTION IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.*

The National Catholic Welfare Conference (N.C.W.C.) was established in the U.S.A. on the 24th September, 1919. It grew out of the National Catholic War Council which had been created by the American Hierarchy at the time the U.S.A. joined the First World War of 1914-18.

It is a voluntary association of the Archbishops and Bishops of United States. In a joint pastoral letter they declared their purpose: "We have grouped together, under the National Catholic Welfare Conference, the various agencies by which the cause of religion is fur-

thered. Each of these continuing its own special work in its chosen field, will now derive additional support through general cooperation."

The Statutes declare that this organisation aims at "unifying, co-ordinating and organising the Catholic peoples of the United States in works of education, social welfare, immigrant aid and other activities."

To carry out these aims and purpose the general body of the Bishops elects at its annual meeting an Administrative Board of ten Bishops. These elect from among themselves their own chairman and determine which members of the Board will act as Chairmen of the several departments. They elect also the General Secretary. The Episcopal Chairman of each department, with the approval of a majority of the Administrative Board, may choose a brother Bishop to assist him in the work of the department. The entire Administrative Board meets regularly twice a year. The Sub-Committees meet every three months. The departments with their sub-committees are :

1. The Executive Department with Bureau for :
   (a) Immigration ;
   (b) The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine ;
   (c) Publication.
2. The Youth Department.
3. The Educational Department.
4. The Press Department.

5. The Social Action Department with Bureaus for:
   (a) Industrial Problems;
   (b) International Peace;
   (c) Family Life;
   (d) Rural Life;
   (e) Health and Hospitals.
6. The Legal Department.
7. The Lay Organization Department with:
   (a) The National Council of Catholic Men;
   (b) The National Council of Catholic Women.
8. The Catholic Action Study Department.

Besides these regular departments and bureaus, the Bishops have established committees for special problems, as for instance:

(a) The National Catholic Community Service;
(b) The Legion of Decency;
(c) The Society for the Propagation of the Faith (Home and Foreign Missions);
(d) The National Organization for Decent Literature;
(e) War Relief Services;
(f) Boy Scouts.

The N.C.W.C. publishes a monthly magazine "Catholic Action."

We are particularly interested in the Lay Organization Department, which is composed of:

(1) The National Council of Catholic Men (N.C.C.M.).

(2) The National Council of Catholic Women (N.C.C.W.).

1. *The National Council of Catholic Men* is a legal corporation of laymen, incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia, U.S.A. It is governed by a corps of elected Officers and an elective board of Directors. All its activities are under the guidance of the Episcopal Chairman and are administered by a full-time lay Executive Secretary and staff.

It federates, co-ordinates and assists societies and groups of Catholic laymen, bringing their representatives together in a common, unified agency or council.

It does not, however, interfere with the forms of any diocesan organizations, which rest entirely on the plans adopted by each individual Bishop. Likewise all societies affiliated with it retain complete autonomy.

This Council maintains:

(a) A monthly publication, "Catholic Men";

(b) A Catholic Evidence Bureau for propaganda and defence of Catholicism;

(c) Assists the Bishops in the National Organization for Decent Literature;

(d) The Catholic Hour which is a nation-wide religious radio programme produced in coopera-

tion with the National Broadcasting Company;

(e) The Hour of Faith, another nation-wide religious programme, produced in cooperation with the American Broadcasting Company;

(f) Faith in Our Time, a third nation-wide programme, in cooperation with the Mutual Broadcasting System.

2. *The National Council of Catholic Women.* This Council is a federation of:

(a) National organizations of Catholic women.

(b) Diocesan Councils composed of Catholic women's organizations within the diocese federated according to the plan of the Bishop.

(c) State and local organizations of Catholic women approved by their respective Bishops.

3. *The Youth Department* facilitates the exchange of information regarding the philosophy, organization and programme-content of Catholic youth organizations, contacts and evaluates national governmental and non-governmental youth organizations and youth-servicing organizations, and promotes that National Catholic Youth Council, the federating agency for all existing, approved Catholic youth groups.

The National Catholic Youth Council is divided into two sections: The Diocesan Section, comprised of the Diocesan Youth Councils — and the College and University Section, comprised of the National Federation of Catholic College Students (for Catholic Schools) and

the Newman Club Federation (for Catholic Students in non-Catholic Colleges).

4. *The Department of Catholic Action Study.* This department was organised to obtain and disseminate as widely as possible the Encyclicals, allocutions and discourses of the Holy Father regarding Catholic Action; to maintain a record of work done by the Bishops, clergy and laity in the line of Catholic Action in the U.S.A., and through research and reports as to method, programmes and achievements, both in the U.S. and abroad, to assist in furthering the aims of the Catholic Action Movement.

The important developments in the field of Catholic Action throughout the world are carefully studied in the light of national organization. The department of Catholic Action Study publishes a quarterly bulletin, "Catholic Action Notes."

The N.C.C.W. (National Council of Catholic Women) is governed by a National Board of Directors, elected, one from each ecclesiastical Province in the United States, at biennial national conventions. This board elects its officers from among its number. The Episcopal Chairman of the Lay Organizations Department, N.C.W.C. (National Catholic Welfare Conference) is the Honorary President of the N.C.C.W. Through its National Committees system, the N.C.C.W. maintains an adult education service, transmitting to its affiliates information and suggestions in all fields covered by the N.C.W.C., and conducting Institutes and Regional Conferences for leadership training; it cooperates with War Relief Services—N.C.W.C. in a continuing clothing pro-

ject for children; from 1921 to 1947 it sponsored the National Catholic School of Social Service.

VI. *THE BELGIAN ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC YOUTH (A.C.J.B.).*

Among the forms and methods adopted in various countries by way of practical organization of Catholic Action, we have reserved as our last example the Belgian System because of its interesting history and appealing character, and because we wish to dwell at greater length in the next chapter on one of its characteristic forms, the J.O.C. which is a typical pattern of specialized Catholic Action.

This Belgian organization is called 'The Belgian Association of Catholic Youth.' Broadly following the Italian scheme of Catholic Action, with the necessary adaptations, it has six separate groups with its General (National) Regional (Diocesan) and parochial committees and a general Secretariat.

Definition. It has been defined: "A Home Mission, willed by the Holy Father, established by their Lordships the Bishops, depending directly upon the Hierarchical authority, aiming at the preservation of Catholicism among our Catholic youth and its propagation in the whole sphere of their influence.... It is a mobilisation of young people of good will in the service of the Church, for the work of an organised apostolate."

(a) *Its object* is 'to reform and conquer'.

(b) *Its motto* is 'to restore Belgium to Christ'.

(c) *Its programme* is 'Prayer, Study, Action'.

(d) *Its spirit* is 'Catholic in all things, always, everywhere'.

General Organization. The movement is highly developed and covers the whole range of Belgian Social life.

The parochial associations for Boys, Girls, Men and Women are sorted out according to the main occupations of the people in the country, being composed of miners and mill-workers, farmers, students, industrialists and professional men. The parochial associations (following the Italian model) are co-ordinated into central parochial groups presided over by a Central parochial committee. Each association follows a single uniform scheme which comprises:

(a) A committee with a lay-President and an Ecclesiastical Assistant or Chaplain;

(b) A study circle for the training of the members;

(c) Specialized courses and lectures;

(d) Retreats and days of recollection;

(e) Special meetings and entertainments.

CHAPTER III

SPECIALIZED CATHOLIC ACTION

Specialized Catholic Action means the organization of movements corresponding to the various surroundings or 'milieux' where the laity act on them and through them for a better realisation of the aim of Catholic Action, that is the Christian penetration and conquests of those same surroundings. Cardinal Pizzardo said some years ago: "Experience shows that the apostolate becomes more fruitful when exercised by the members of the same social class, adapting the means of their apostolate to the needs of the class or category to which they belong and which they strive to conquer." (29th March, 1934.)

Specialized Catholic Action is then the apostolate of the like by the like in the milieu, the surroundings or the environment, as we prefer to call it, in which we live. It is Catholic life in action, that is to say, it is Catholic life practised in an exemplary way in the environment in which we live so as to influence it.

Specialization does not constitute an essential characteristic of Catholic Action, as such. It would be wrong to say that Catholic Action *is* specialization or that specialization is an essential characteristic of Catholic Action.

Cardinal Van Roey on his return from Rome (February 1934) warned the Catholic Young Men's Association of Belgium and asked them to preserve the unity of Catholic Action in spite of its specialization. "Endeavour", said His Eminence, "to achieve both

ends. You are one organization of Catholic Action: the technique of specialization is a very useful MEANS of penetration, but it must not lose sight of, nor interfere with the UNITY of the general movement."

The principles of Catholic Action stand out clear and precise in the definition given by Pius XI. On the strength of these principles the aim and purpose of Catholic Action cannot change, but the ways and means to realize that aim are innumerable and cannot be restricted to any particular method. Catholic Action can be worked out by various methods, as we have seen before, but none of these can claim the monopoly of realizing its aim, the triumph of Christ over all men. "Specialization is a method to be preferred" said Fr. P. Lalande, "but not an exclusive method."

We must admit however, that in some places, owing to certain circumstances and to the present needs, experience has shown that the best results have been achieved by specialized Catholic Action. This method rests, in fact, on a sound psychological principle, expressed by Pope Pius XII in the following terms:

> "It is a great law of nature as well as of grace that similarity opens the door to rapprochment and to affection." (Address to the Italian Catholic Action, September 4, 1940.)

Let us see how it works.

THE SOCIAL MILIEU.

What is that social milieu or social environment? The milieu or the environment is the complex of persons and things within which the individual moves and acts.

The exterior or the material environment as well as the social environment have a great influence on the material and social life of the individual.

The common saying '*tell me with whom you associate and I shall tell you what you are*' or '*birds of a feather flock together*' is a practical proof of the conviction shared by all, that environment plays an important role in the life of each individual. It is so even in nature. It suffices to put a rotten fruit in a basket of good fruit to see how all are soon contaminated. So, too, unfortunately, it is among men. The instinct of imitation is natural to man and especially to young people. Young people, and we may say, grown ups too, living in a milieu where piety and virtue flourish, are generally pious and virtuous, whereas one would not be surprised to see the same people turn bad and irreligious in a different milieu where religion and morality are held in little esteem.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE MILIEU.

The milieu or the environment seems to have its law from which you cannot escape, just as you cannot escape from the space in which you move, or from the air you breathe. This law is often an iron rule worse even than what is called fashion or mode with which it has affinity. It sometimes becomes a compelling force, nay more a fell ruthless tyranny, going so far as to create social sanctions against one who does not bow to its dictates or who thinks differently. Durkheim has well said: "*It is the environment which forms and it is the environment which deforms. It is environment which is the corrupter and which can also be the educator.*"

Pius XI realized more than anyone else the power and the dangerous influence of the environment on men and on society of which it forms a part. Hence, in his numberless pronouncements, he insisted not only on the reform of the manners of life in all, but also on the *reform of the environment* as well, because this is possible and feasible. In fact, if the environment influences, it can also be influenced and, not infrequently it can be changed. This is done from within. If the environment has a great influence on the individual for better or for worse, there is no doubt that the individual in his turn can influence the milieu and if he has a strong personality, he can even give it an entirely different shape. History shows how a single man, a leader, has been able to influence his surroundings and subdue them to his will and sometimes to his caprice. The influence is reciprocal, but the stronger wins.

It has been said that when the day shall come when each man will know his catechism and observe its rule in his public and private life, then the social questions will be solved and the world will be saved. In the present circumstances with factories and industries, communications and trades developed as they are, with the masses mixing together, moving in the same space, breathing the same air, exchanging continually their views and sentiments, individual betterment is not enough; there must be a social improvement. "*Fishing with a line is too slow a process. The net* (of specialized Catholic Action) *must be cast out to catch the whole shoal.*" (Fr. P. Lalande). "We must take into account the new situation created by the changes in the contemporary world; urbanism, cosmopolitanism, nomadic

TAMILNADU ARCHIVES LIBRARY No. 20722

lives, the drift to the cities, migrations by workers, seasonal occupations, the multiplication of establishments, all these combine to place the point of contact with the individual more and more in his occupation or in his social milieu. This specialization which irresistible forces have set up within the social order, calls for corresponding specialized apostolic organizations." (P. Dabin: *L'Action Catholique*).

To isolate the individual in the attempt to save him from perverse influence might be good but has shown to be an inefficient method. More than ever before, man has to be considered as a member of a large body, a social being, one of the society, and should not be isolated. To save him from the bad influence of the environment we must reform, christianize the environment.

"*For more than a century,*" says Abbe Bordet in 'Notion de Milieu', "*the error has prevailed* that one could change and improve the individual without changing the environment in which he lives. The attempt was made to isolate the individual under the pretext that he alone had a personal existence. Yet this environment, at which they turned up their noses, soon weakened, if not completely destroyed, the most courageous efforts. It is now realized, however, that to christianize individuals, the quickest, and certainly, the surest way (because it guarantees perseverance as much as it is possible) is to christianize the surroundings which continually exercise their influence." Influence comes through contact. You cannot influence people unless you establish contact with them. As the masses keep aloof and do not come to us, we must go to them.

We must establish contact with them so as to influence them. To enter into the environment is the way to contact it and to influence it.

THE PRINCIPLES OF SPECIALIZED CATHOLIC ACTION.

Pius XI in his Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* shows the method of approach:

> "*Present* circumstances indicate clearly the course to be followed. Nowadays, as more than once in the history of the Church, we are confronted with a world which in large measure has almost relapsed into paganism. In order to bring back to Christ the different classes of men who have denied Him we must gather and train from amongst their very ranks auxiliary soldiers of the Church, men who well know their mentality and their aspirations and who by kindly fraternal charity will be able to win their hearts. Undoubtedly the first and immediate apostles of the working men must themselves be workingmen, while the apostles of the industrial and commercial world should themselves be employers and merchants."

In his Encyclical *Divini Redemptoris* the same Pontiff comes back again more specifically on this subject:

> "*We* are thinking likewise of those associations of workmen, farmers, technicians, doctors, employers, students and others of like character, groups of men and women who live in the same cultural atmosphere and share the same way of life. Precisely these groups and organizations are destined to introduce into society that order which we have envisaged in our

> Encyclical Quadragesimo Anno, and thus to spread in the vast and various fields of culture and labour the recognition of the Kingdom of Christ."

Writing to the Archbishop of Bogota the same Pontiff says:

> "Rightly, Catholic Action must realize its specialized aims in the midst of the diverse social classes of workingmen, of students, of professional men, of teachers." (14-2-1934).

Addressing the delegates of the French Catholic Action on the 6th April 1934, Pius XI emphasised the same idea. He congratulated them on their programme of action

> "so well adapted to actual circumstances, a particular apostolate differing according to needs and to various environments. An activity that is particular, qualified, specialized, presenting the closest analogy to the method that we indicate for missionaries: native priests for the native people. Each situation will have then its corresponding apostolate: the apostles of the workers will be workers, the apostles of the farmers will be farmers, the apostles of the seamen will be seamen, the apostles of the students will be students."

And again the Holy Father speaking to the Delegates of the International Union of Catholic Women's League insisted on this principle and on this method.

> "The activities of Catholic women", said Pius XI, "conform perfectly with the principles willed and adopted by the Pope and sanctioned by his venerable predecessors when speaking of the missions: native clergy for the

> native people: for the different milieu and in the different milieu, apostles from these same milieux.... This is the method which must be followed. The apostles will be better understood in the milieu to which they address themselves, if they themselves belong to these milieux. Here you have a point vital to Catholic Action."

Canon Cardijn speaking at St. Joseph's College, Beulah Hills, London, referred to an audience he had with Pius XII who told him:

> "I can write Encyclicals, I can write about social doctrines, I can speak on the radio, but I cannot go into the factories, into the shops, into the offices, into the mines...... nor can Bishops do this, nor priests, for these places are closed to them. Therefore the Church needs thousands and thousands of militant lay-missionaries, young boys and girls, who are the representatives of the Church in their environment."

This is the apostolate of 'like by the like', each one a missionary in his own environment. The renewal of the Christian social order will come through a renewal of the Christian spirit in all, and this renewal can be achieved by specialized Catholic Action which is one of the best methods answering the needs of our time.

A MODEL EXPERIMENT.

The Jocist Movement is one form of the specialized Catholic Action. The movement is commonly called the J.O.C. from the French 'Jeunesse Ouvriere Catholique'. Its equivalent in English is called the 'Young Christian Workers'. It is Catholic Action among the workers. It is "an organization which groups, trains, assists and

represents the Young Workers so that they may re-christianize the whole of their own selves, the whole of their environment and the whole of their fellow workers." (Father Rochford).

It has been praised by the Holy Father Pius XI and given as an example of Catholic Action.

> "The J.O.C." said the Pope, "has perfectly interpreted the guiding principles of Catholic Action, of which it is an inspired working example." On another occasion the same Pontiff said: "We have defined Catholic Action in the way it has been perfectly realized by the Jocist Movement and interpreted in its publications that have come to our knowledge."

The J.O.C. Movement was started in 1925, by Canon Cardijn. It was later adapted to farmers (J.A.C.), students (J.E.C.), industrialists (J.I.C.), and university students (J.U.C.). This was in Belgium. In France also it has been organised and is working well. Its aims are:

(1) to undertake the complete formation of the young workers;

(2) progressively and methodically to transform the social life of the working class by promoting and facilitating the spread of social ideas and the improvement of professional life;

(3) to create organizations to defend and help young workers in every respect.

It has given to its members a definite end to attain and a definite problem to solve, as well as means to fol-

low, namely, the re-christianization of their environment by radiating Christ in their milieu. This has given to the movement which is a school and an organization, its distinctive character and its real spirit, as Canon Cardijn puts it.

The Enquiry Method.

The method used for the education and the formation of the members is the enquiry method. People think and reflect too little nowadays. Lack of reflection brings lack of judgement in deciding and lack of prudence in acting. We must, then, teach the youth to reflect, that is to see and observe things by themselves and to reflect on them and their consequences. This evokes discernment and judgement and makes youth act accordingly, with prudence. Such a training produces slowly a confidence and a conviction in the members that make them daring in their apostolate and gives them a greater influence in their milieu.

St. Thomas (IIa IIae-Quaest. 49) when speaking of the virtue of prudence says that the principal function of prudence is to direct human actions, namely to ordain them towards their moral end. The prudent then must forsee.... The secondary acts of prudence are advice and judgement followed by the action. "Prudens dicitur quasi porro videns .... Principalis actus prudentiae est praecipere; secundarius est judicare et consiliari."

The principles of Christian prudence explained at length by St. Thomas, are pure commonsense. They must have inspired Canon Cardijn, for, in working his enquiry method he has condensed those principles in

three short but concrete and complete words: See — Judge — Act.

Knowing men and youth particularly, Canon Cardijn realised that the young workers, to whom he had consecrated his life, living in factories or mixed with the mass, would soon have their sight, their judgement and their action influenced by their environment. To change and influence that environment for better, the young workers should:

(1) See or observe their surroundings and know the situation before them;

(2) Judge or discern what is right and wrong so as to know how they should

(3) Act to change and influence their environment.

This process is most natural. If it appears complex in theory, it is most simple in its application. In fact it comes most natural to any prudent and reasonable man: (1) to observe things; (2) to judge them; and (3) to act only after the will has been enlightened by the intellect and this moved by the senses.

This requires naturally a formation, moral and spiritual, as well as a training of the senses, the intellect and the will. Hence the necessity of a method. The J.O.C. has its method and by it has achieved wonderful success. It is in fact a living, active, realistic, organic method.

"The J.O.C. aims at providing for all young workers an intellectual, moral and religious formation adapted to every aspect of their active lives in such a way as to serve their own happiness, to assist social progress and

to promote the glory of God. Thus it is that the J.O.C. is a school adapted to the needs of the young workers which aims at setting up for them a worker's culture to achieve their true rehabilitation." (Canon Cardijn).

The J.O.C. is a School.

"It is a practical school, a school of apprenticeship, in which they learn to see, to judge and to realize in practice the apostolic value of their whole life, of every detail and aspect of that life even the most humble and ordinary and that by themselves, in their homes, in their districts, in their street, in their factory, at the office desk, on the way to work, during their free times, everywhere and always, in their companionship, their betrothal, their marriage: not a theoretical or purely doctrinal school, but a school in which the members themselves achieve their own formation; a school which is essentially practical, active and effective, with its enquiries and its answers, which inculcates a social sense, a social spirit, a social conduct, and which takes hold of members far more readily than all theoretical courses and lessons which merely leave their hearers passive and inert; a school which reveals to them the beauty and grandeur of their humble life as young workers; which exalts them and which effects in their whole life an indispensible unity and harmony, giving them strength and conviction of character, and making them proud to lead Christian lives that are apostolic and radiant; a school finally which transforms their lives as young workers into a lay priesthood and a lay apostolate whose fruitfullness astonishes and delights all those who come in contact with it." (Canon Cardijn).

Their study is not the theoretical study of the ordinary students whose aim is to acquire knowledge, but they study as Christians to intensify their Christian life, so as to radiate Christ in their environment and influence it to the extent of christianizing it. Theirs is not a purely theoretical instruction, but a practical education, not a theoretical research but a practical social training. They do not study the problems as theses, but they work at the practical solution of the problems adapting and applying Christian principles in real life.

As the J.O.C. Manual puts it : " The study ought to be a knowledge acted upon in real life, a conscious guiding of actions, a living organization ; these three mutually influencing each other." Their studies are eminently practical. They restrict themselves to matters within their capacity and their grasp and of their real value to the members and their needs. It is as P. Bayard puts it : " An education in concrete realities, (i.e. dealing with actual cases), an education in real life (i.e., in practical matters) an education carried right into the environment itself (a social training); in a word, an education that is exactly adapted, adjusted, concentrated in its object, not carried out up to the air, away from reality, in the abstract ; but as it were, 'made to measurement.' There you have in miniature the whole of the J.O.C."

The J.O.C. then is an educative organization and an organised education which does not restrict its training to the intellect of its members, but takes and forms the whole man and his whole life, his senses and imagination, his intelligence and his will. It teaches him to make

use of all his faculties, eyes, ears, brain, feet and hands, to better himself and to better his surroundings, namely, all those with whom he enters into contact.

"The whole of this formation is penetrated with the all-embracing light of Christianity, 'a light', says Canon Cardijn, 'which should illuminate all the problems which beset the consciences of young workers, a light which is the final goal of all the actions of life as well as of all social institutions." (P. Bayard).

Pius XII and the J.O.C.

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the J.O.C., on behalf of Pius XII, Mgr. Montini, acting Papal Secretary, wrote as follows to Cardinal Suhard, Archbishop of Paris (25-6-1946): "The fruits borne by this form of apostolate in Belgium, France and elsewhere prove beyond doubt that it is eminently adapted to the de-christianized conditions of the modern world. It is therefore desirable that it be welcomed by the Hierarchy of other countries as well, so that it may be able to exercise its full power for good, and to organise itself on the international plan, for the problems concerning the world of labour are becoming more and more international.

It is desirable also that priests in ever greater numbers, understanding this mission, may consecrate themselves to the important ministry of Ecclesiastical Assistants of Catholic Action among workers. This will demand from them, as from their superiors, an effort of adaptation, of understanding and of coordination which, while respecting the traditional rules of the Church's

public law, knows also how to find the formulae and methods that correspond to new needs and new necessities."

Addressing the Young Christian Workers of Belgium on the 25th anniversary of their foundation, Pope Pius XII said:

> "So many priests and religious from your ranks given to the Church; millions of leaders, trained by your methods, at the head of powerful labour organizations, and even among statesmen; a host of young workers ready to renew their apostolic commitment in the service of their brothers and sisters in work! What a magnificent answer to the call of Our venerated predecessor and to Our own expectation; a guarantee of the rechristianization of the working class throughout the world!
>
> "The apostolate of workers must be integrated, with wisdom and discernment, in the general economy of the apostolate of modern man. This leads Us to warn you against a mistake only too commonly made, even among Catholics, namely, the classification of souls into categories. No, there are not two kinds of men, workers and non-workers. To think so would be to delude onself with regard to the present state of the social question and to show an intellectual shortsightedness unworthy of a Catholic; one would be lulled into the unfortunate illusion that the Church will only win the workers if she accepts all their demands, however incapable of fulfilment they may be.
>
> "As for you, Young Christian Workers, We have confidence in you, in your apostolate which

is specialised yet inserted in its place in the total apostolate of the Church today. May your movement grow and bear its living witness to the presence of Christ and the Church in the working class; may it spread its spirit of Christian brotherhood among all young workers of every race and colour; may it create a spirit of collaboration between the professions and social classes; may it come to our troubled world as a leaven of Charity and peace".

N.B.—For those who wish to learn more about specialised Catholic Action and the J.O.C. we refer them to the following works:—

P. BAYARD — L'Action Catholique specialisee

PAUL DABIN — L'Action Catholique

PAUL LELOTTE — Fundamental Principles of Catholic Action

S. SAMA — Progressive Training in Catholic Action

N. N. — How to start a Section of Y.C.W.

V. ROCHFORD — The Young Christian Workers

V. ROCHFORD — The Priest and the Y.C.W.

H. ROY — The Jocist Movement

S. ANDERL — The Technique of Catholic Action Cell

CANON CARDIJN — The Spirit of the Young Christian Workers

C. MAYNE &
K. W. MITCHELL — The Enquiry

The Jocist Manual and publications regarding the J.O.C., like the Bulletin des Dirigeants, Lettres aux Aumoniers and Notes de Pastorale Jociste.

CHAPTER IV

THE STUDY CIRCLE*

The Study Circle is a perfect and agreeable means in the matter of Catholic training and formation. In fact it is the classical method for the formation of leaders. "They are called Study Circles" says A. M. Croft, O.P., in his book 'Catholic Social Action' "because study is the object of the members who form them. Each group is called a circle because the members by their association in thought and ideas cooperate and aid one another and the whole body towards a fuller knowledge of the questions at issue". Well conducted and made pleasing, the Study Circle becomes the nursery for recruitment and formation of leaders for the lay apostolate just as the Seminary for the recruitment and formation of candidates for priestly apostolate.

This chapter could be divided into three parts:

1st. the principle;

2nd. the aim, and

3rd. the method of Study Circles.

We shall however deal here with the first and third point only, namely the *principle* and the *method* of Study Circles. We have spoken at length of the aim, in Chapter V part I, when treating of the formation or training of the members of Catholic Action. We do not need to say more here on that subject.

---

*See Appendix I-C.

I. THE PRINCIPLE OF STUDY CIRCLES

The necessity of a technique :—We have often heard it said of men who succeed well in their enterprises that they are methodical. It means that they follow a method, a line of conduct in their work and much success is due to that technique of theirs. But at the same time we have to acknowledge that among many people engaged in the apostolate, be they priests, religious or lay people, a good number have no method, no technique and they go on, in their apostolic work, moved by impulse and sentiment, and not seldom by whims and fancies. The law of charity cannot even excuse those engaged in the apostolate from following a method, from having a technique, for indeed we do not deal with angels but with feeble creatures for whom a code, a rule, a method is necessary.

Modern apostolate and modern technique :—The modern apostolate follows a new technique. What a change in the methods of teaching in the last twenty five years! What a variety of studies of ways and means for the improvement of the apostolate in mission lands! A new science has, so to say, been created for that purpose, viz., 'Missiology'. Social service has established centres for the training of its workers. We could go on with the list but suffice to say, for our purpose, that, in the training of its members Catholic Action must have and in fact has its technique and its method.

Study Circle and Catholic Action :—Among the means of action made use of by Catholic Action for the realization of its aim and purpose, Study Circle plays a prominent part. It is a means and not an end, for its

purpose is to form and train for action; it is a practical means, a school for life at the service of Catholic Action. Now a Study Circle is not improvised; it must follow a rule, a method, a technique as we have just remarked for other forms of apostolate, otherwise it is bound to fail. Study Circle is an art and needs a technique.

An aid to religious ignorance:—Christianity does not consist in exterior rites only or in a mere code of life. It is a life which requires the entire adherence of our will to the will of God with all its consequences. It is a beautiful life, for it is a divine life. How many are the Catholics who understand Christianity in its full meaning and significance and are acquainted with the riches of its doctrine? Many of our Catholics have attended the Cathechism classes for some years, up to Matriculation. Religious instruction for them stopped at the age of sixteen when they were more than ever in need of it. Few have had the privilege of continuing their education in Catholic colleges. A good number of our students belong to good Christian families and naturally live according to Christian principles. Some, however, might not have the knowledge required to meet the varying problems of their everyday life. The majority of our lay-people know their Faith through the sermons they hear in our churches. Too few are those who really possess a thorough knowledge of their faith and we can consequently say that a great number of our Catholics are unfortunately superficial in their religious knowledge and stand in need of further instruction. From the indifferent, superficial Catholics to the fervent ones there are several grades of intermediary types. Few are those who understand and live the supernatural life

to such a degree that it affords them the habit of continually living in the presence of God and in His intimacy. How can they be shining examples of Christian life in the midst of irreligious and indifferent people, if they do not know their faith thoroughly ? What are the causes of such an appalling lack of conviction among Catholics ? We shall not look for all the existing causes but we shall just point out one, i.e. *religious ignorance*, the source of all mediocrity among our fellow Christians.

Need of deeper Religious Study :—The remedy therefore is a deeper knowledge of our Faith which means a deeper study of it. The knowledge of truth and goodness is certainly the first step towards the practice of goodness but mere knowledge is not enough to bring people to its thorough practice. It is still too abstract and limited to impose itself on our will enfeebled by original sin. We need a regular and persevering instruction, adapted to the age, condition and real needs of each one of our people so as to make them personally interested in the desire of knowing and improving the knowledge of their faith and make them live it thoroughly. Study circles well understood and conducted seem to be the ideal means of such a thorough instruction and formation.

Need of conviction :—To be a thorough Catholic one needs to be a convinced Catholic. Conviction is the conscious knowledge of the value of a principle or doctrine which has been converted into action by an effort of mind and that with pleasure. It is therefore the result of an act of the intellect, of the will and of the

heart. It requires knowledge which is turned into action and that with gladness. Such a conviction can guide a life and go so far as to demand any sacrifice which is gladly accepted. It makes one thorough. The Study Circle creates that conviction. In fact, it makes one reflect and deeply too. It makes one express one's thought and by means of discussion it makes one clarify the thoughts and ideas which by becoming clearer, act on one's will and heart. One becomes convinced, so to say, unshakeable. Was it not St. Augustine who said: "Circulus et calamus fecerunt me doctorem"? The discussions in the company of friends when he verbally gave expression to his thoughts and ideas, and his continual writing, clarified and gave precision to his mind and made of St. Augustine the scholar that he was. Nay more, they made him a convinced Christian and a great Saint. Here is an example of what a Study Circle can do. The Study Circle can achieve great results and will be of lasting benefit for all those who perseveringly attend to it. It compels them to give expression to their views and by this means to make an effort at synthesis and precision which cannot but have a great influence on them and on their life. It will be a matter for surprise to them as well as all others who join the Study Circle to discover treasures of infinite value in the doctrine and principles which appeared to them before as simple principles and which perhaps sometimes they may even have thought, void or very abstract.

Gutta cavat lapidem:—Extraordinary meetings occasionally held do help to stir souls and impress many of those present with the ideas which have been explained. But very often impressions grow dim with time

and they are soon either effaced altogether or the beautiful ideas which might have stirred us are stifled by subsequent ideas and by other pre-occupations and they soon vanish. Not so with the Study Circles. They are held at regular intervals and hence their influence is much deeper and lasts longer. By their continuity they transform the spirit and mind of those regularly attending them and gradually create that conviction which time will never erase or enfeeble. Their power is great, their influence lasting. Periodically, that is generally every fortnight, the members meet together in an atmosphere of charity and homeliness. They study and discuss the subjects assigned which they had been considering for some time. It is not a dry intellectual meeting where a subject which might be of interest to just a few of those present is discussed. In the Study Circle the subject is of common interest and all take an active and keen part in its discussions, in a special atmosphere, with a supernatural imprint favourable to all. It is, so to say, an intellectual and spiritual bath, the influence of which cannot be soon forgotten or vanish. It leaves its impression behind and deeply strengthens the resolutions and makes of the members convinced leaders.

The elite and our duty:—We need a Christian elite; we need lay leaders as we have seen in Part I. These can only come from among solid Catholics well trained in their faith and well acquainted with its practice. The elite cannot be raised of a sudden nor without much preparation and training. It will not be formed by itself but must be fostered by priests. As the clergy is formed and trained in Seminaries, as the Religious undergo their training in the Novitiates and Scholasticates, so also the

laity destined to be the elite have to be well instructed and trained and this by the clergy whose duty in this regard need not be further emphasised. The means to train the leader is the Study Circle.

II. THE METHOD OF CONDUCTING STUDY CIRCLES.

Order of the Meeting:—It has been found that the following order constitutes a successful procedure for regular study circles. Of course adaptability and flexibility are qualities which must be made use of in the running of Study Circles also. Not a rigid but an informal procedure creates a better atmosphere.

(a) Opening Prayer.

(b) Roll Call.

(c) Minutes of the previous meeting in which is incorporated a brief summary of the previous week's discussion.

(d) Religious formation

Discussion on:

i. New Testament

ii. Liturgical questions.

(e) Reading or development of the chosen theme — Discussion in which every member takes active part.

(f) Assignment of topic for the next meeting.

(g) Appointment of proponent for the following meeting. Certain members are detailed to work up points for discussions, pros and cons.

(h) The time and place for the next meeting.

(i) Miscellaneous.

(j) Closing Prayer.

Some explanation on the order proposed above.

(a) *The Opening Prayer*: This opening prayer can be a prayer to the Holy Ghost. To avoid routine, however, the prayer could be changed from time to time but if a Ritual has been prepared this should be followed. The prayer must be said *clearly, slowly* and *piously.* It is good that these prayers are said for a special intention which should be announced at the beginning of the meeting. This common prayer is a manifestation of faith on the part of the members: it affirms the spiritual character of the meeting and creates a supernatural atmosphere from the very beginning of the meeting.

(b) *Roll Call*: As the members of Study Circles should not be more than fifteen in number the roll call is easily and quickly taken. The Secretary must have a special register with the names of the members. The register may be drawn in the manner of an attendance register with columns bearing the date of the meeting. When the names are called out, a little (+) is put on the line against the name in the column bearing the date of the meeting. This can be done in a minute's time when the members are accustomed to meetings.

(c) *Minutes of the Previous Meeting*: All the work done at the previous meeting must be recorded and summarized by the Secretary in a special copy book used for that purpose but never on loose sheets of paper. This

summary must be brief, clear and concise. It must contain a short summary of the subject presented and discussed as well as of the decision arrived at and any suggestions of interest made by the members at the previous meeting.

A short discussion must then follow, examining the report point by point so as to give each member an opportunity to make his remarks or to declare his success or failure or the obstacles he has met with in carrying out the suggestions or programme of action, if any, which were presented at the last meeting. They review every decision recorded in the minutes showing what has been done and how it has been done. This helps the members to accustom themselves to give an exact account of their activities and stimulates in all a sense of responsibility. As the practical apostolate of the members must be made by contacts, trying to influence their surroundings, it will be useful to all of them, if, during the discussion, they report with simplicity and sincerity about their sphere of action, their contacts and the means they have employed to influence others and to win them to Christ. This includes a possible report on the acts of service they have accomplished to contribute to the spiritual and even material advantage of others.

(d) *Religious formation*: We have stressed in a previous chapter the importance of religious formation. The religious formation varies according to the different types of members attending the Study Circle. It must be simple, adapted to the members but always meant to infuse into the hearts and minds of all the members a

deep knowledge of Christ Our Leader and an immense love for Him, with a fervent desire to serve Him. It must impress the minds and hearts of the members that Jesus Christ is the 'Truth' of God, the 'Way' to God and also our 'Life'. To increase this 'Life' must be the real aim of the religious formation in the Circle.

The best means to attain this aim are:—

(1) Study of the New Testament;

(2) Living the Sacred Liturgy.

(1) The knowledge of Christ is found in the New Testament. To be acquainted with Christ means to study where He lived, how He lived, how He acted, what contacts He made and what influence He exercised. After the knowledge, the imitation of Christ follows naturally and the members as Christophers, or bearers of Christ, radiate Him in their private and public lives. It is then the task of the leader of the Circle to select from the New Testament certain passages adapted to the type of members attending the Circle. Every member should have a copy of the New Testament or at least of the Gospel or the Epistle, portions of which will be read.

The leader assigns the reading of the passage chosen to everyone of the members by turn and the latter after reading the same clearly and slowly makes a short comment so as to introduce it for discussion by the members. It is more advantageous to choose the passage and assign it to a member at a previous meeting. All the members can then read it also before the meeting, think over it and come ready with their points for the discussion which becomes certainly more lively and interesting. As the time assigned for this particular item is

fixed, the members should be short and to the point in making their remarks. It is not necessary that the passage or the episode read should be discussed in all its aspects or completely at one meeting. Several meetings can be devoted for a single episode or a few verses of the Gospels or Epistles which are full of meaning and salutary teachings.

It is of practical importance to apply always the teachings and the conclusions we have arrived at to our personal lives and to the practical apostolate which follows as a consequence. Indeed this will create a Christ-like mentality in the members who slowly will begin to think with Christ, like Christ. They will see things with the eyes of Christ and be soon transformed not only into excellent Catholics but into real apostles which is the very aim of Catholic Action.

(2) *Living the Sacred Liturgy*: It is not necessary to have both the study of the New Testament and the discussion on the Liturgy at the same meeting. At the beginning and for some certain type of members it is advisable not to combine both studies at the same meeting. As a general rule let the study of the Gospels or of the Epistles and the study of Liturgy be alternated. When, however, after some years, the members are well acquainted with the routine of the Circle, then the New Testament discussion and the Liturgy may be combined. In fact much of the Liturgy is taken from the New Testament. Experience will help to decide which way to follow.

"The Liturgy" said Pope Pius XI, "is the most important organ of the ordinary magisterium of

> the Church". In his encyclical on the Kingship of Christ he wrote: "The feasts of the Church Year (the liturgy) are more suitable for instructing people in the faith and for bringing the fullness of the interior joy to their souls than the solemn expositions of the Church's teaching office.... The spoken word sounds but once, the feasts speak to us every year and at all times".

The liturgy is found, however, above all in the Mass. The first part of the Mass, that which changes everyday, is designed to teach. It has the Epistle and the Gospel in this part and so it can be combined with the study of the New Testament as explained above. The liturgy is certainly the great book from which the members can learn all which concerns Christ, His Church and its members. It is for this reason that subjects on the liturgy, like the sacrifice of the Holy Mass, the doctrine of the Mystical Body etc., could be treated with great profit as the chosen theme for several meetings. It is, therefore, because of its great importance in our spiritual life, that liturgy should be a common topic like the study of the New Testament at the meetings of the Circle and should not be neglected. To live the liturgy which is the life of Christ in action is to live the life of Christ. The explanation of the Gospel or of the Liturgy must not turn into a debate on exegesis or into theological discussions. These are not subjects to be dealt with in the study circles of which we are now concerned. They might be useful in a Circle at the Seminary or at a Meeting of Priests. Here what we need is to revive the memory of Christ and to look at Him as Our Leader.

(e) *The Reading and the development of the chosen theme*: This is the longest item in the agenda of the Study Circle. Half the time practically of the meeting can be consecrated to it as it really forms the very purpose of the Circle. If the religious formation of the members is necessary and this is taken up in great part by the study of the New Testament and the discussions on Liturgy, the apostolic formation of the members is not less necessary. The apostolate of the laity is indeed the essential characteristic of Catholic Action. This particular item of the agenda must then take up the whole formation of the members, namely, their religious, social, technical and apostolic formation. We have treated about all these points in a previous chapter when speaking of the formation of the members.

(1) *The choice of the Subject*: The choice of the subject to be explained and discussed is most important.

(i) This must first of all be adapted to the mentality, knowledge, intelligence, and condition of the members. A subject which is good for students might not be interesting for young workers. A subject corresponding to the problems of adults is not fit for youngsters. Even for grown ups the subject must be in consonance with their position in life and capacity of understanding.

(ii) The subject must not be too difficult. Moreover it must not be too vast nor too vague.

(iii) As the study circle, in its relation to Catholic Action, is not an academic debate, nor a conference to intellectuals nor a dissertation, it must be practical, concrete in the subject chosen, avoiding philosophical or

theological discussions seldom appropriate to the mentality of the listeners.

(iv) On the other hand any subject that conforms to the aim and object of the particular study circle and is adapted to the intellectual capacity of the members is a fit subject for discussion.

(v) If a booklet or any encyclical has been chosen for study, every member should have a copy of it. If the theme chosen involves some difficulties and requires thinking, it is advisable that the members get at least a summary of it so as to follow it more easily.

(vi) It follows that it is not necessary to have a fresh subject for every meeting. This would not be possible if for example an encyclical is taken up for study. Several meetings can be devoted to one subject.

(2) *Preparation of the subject*: After choosing the subject, comes the choice of the proponent who will develop the subject, read it and discuss it at the meeting with the members. All the members can be chosen by turn as proponents, as this forms a good training for all. If this is not possible, due to peculiar circumstances, all the members without exception must at least take part in the discussion. The Ecclesiastical Assistant or the Leader of the Circle must help the proponent with suggestions and material for the development of the subject. Literature on the subject should be chosen and placed at the disposal of the proponents.

(3) *The presentation of the subject*: This really is the technique of the Circle and care should be taken to understand it well as all the success of the Circle depends precisely on this particular point. In other

words the question is how must the subject be presented. There is a series of methods. Not all are suitable to all the members but a little variety would not be out of place. The principal methods are :—

(i) the complete exposition of the report or subject and thereafter the discussions or the exchange of views ;

(ii) the exposition of the subject mingled contemporaneously with the exchange of views;

(iii) Socrates' method ;

(iv) The enquiry method ; and

(v) an idea of other subsidiary methods.

Whatever the method, the reporter must prepare thoroughly his subject and divide it in a logical order. Improvisation is fatal to the circle and makes the reporter speak at random and unable to follow and guide the discussion.

There must be some logic in the development of the subject lest it become unconnected and superficial and hence without interest and profit to the members. This naturally requires work, but it pays. The reporter gains in his formation and the listeners enjoy the topic. The tone and form of the report must naturally be according to the capacity and the knowledge of the members.

There are plans already prepared for the study circles. But here again the reporter who must develop the plan must not wait to study it at the meeting in which it has to be developed and discussed. Any original report or any already prepared plan must be studied

beforehand and assimilated. Let us now explain separately the various methods of developing the subject.

(1) *The complete exposition of the subject first, followed thereafter by discussions or exchange of views*: If we follow this method, then the meeting turns at this point into a conference where the speaker presents his whole subject in a clear and logical order. This conference must not exceed ten minutes as the discussion and the exchange of views are more important. Has the reporter to read or speak his text? If he is capable of presenting his subject well by means of a speech, this is certainly a better manner as it gives more life to the meeting. But if the speaker is shy and may easily lose the trend of his ideas, it is better that he reads his report. This over, then comes the exchange of views. Somebody must start and break the ice and for this purpose it is good that certain members be appointed at the previous meeting to work up points for discussion. The Ecclesiastical Assistant or the Leader must play a great part here in conducting the discussion. He must see that charity, kindness and magnanimity are always maintained. If the subject chosen is extensive it could be explained in several conferences or the conference could be divided into various chapters and discussed at several meetings. This method, however, is not suited to all sorts of listeners as it requires a certain standard and culture on their part to be able to follow the conference well.

(2) *The doctrinal exposition mixed with the exchange of views*: It is a guided conversation. This requires a good leader who has prepared well the ques-

tions beforehand and who knows how to make the members take an active part in the discussion. This method makes the Circle very lively, but it is more delicate to be dealt with than the previous method, as it requires from the leader or the reporter a good preparation and a good possession of the subject, so as to be able to answer all the unforeseen questions.

(3) *Socratic method*: Socrates was fond of this method which is adapted to the psychology of the pupils and of simple people. He did not present to his pupils any elaborate exposition of his doctrine. His method was that of a simple conversation between himself and his pupils and among the pupils themselves guided by him. There was life in those classes and the pupils were proud just as if they, themselves, had found the solution of the proposed problems. The class was conducted in an atmosphere of simplicity and cordiality, naturally conducted and controlled by the great Philosopher. It looked like an exchange of views between him and the pupils who felt they were getting something and at the same time contributing something also. It is natural that such classes or meetings are lively and create a great interest in all.

It is understood that the conversation must be focussed on a particular and definite subject already assigned. Like Socrates who was conducting his class, guiding his pupils in their answers, so must the leader, responsible for the study circle, direct the members in their discussion and control them so that they may not turn the meeting into a superficial conversation where all wish to speak at random, without reference to the

subject. The direction and control must not at the same time be excessive and deprive the meeting of its character of spontaneity and homeliness.

(4) *The Enquiry method*: This is the method particularly used by the Jocist movement of which we have spoken already. Canon Cardijn started this enquiry method which has three objects:

(a) *See* or observe your surroundings and try to understand the situation and consequently

(b) *Judge* what is right or wrong in the surroundings or in the situation and then,

(c) *Act* so as to influence and if necessary change the surroundings or the situation.

This method seeks to develop in the Jocists the habit of a real personal thinking which will force them naturally to action. They are not told what to do, they must discover it by themselves. This is a most natural process based on prudence. This method provides for the intellectual, moral, religious and social training of the young workers. It is a school and as Canon Cardijn puts it, it is "a practical school, a school of apprenticeship, in which they learn to see, to judge and to realize in practice the apostolic value of their whole life". One sees the facts of a particular situation, judges those facts in the light of Christian principles and then resolves to take action accordingly. This method develops the spirit of observation and trains the members in judging facts and circumstances with a criterion and wisdom, and creates in them a real Christian conception of men and things and a thorough conviction.

This method can be combined also with the three previous methods we have explained above. It must, however, be remembered that this method might not always be adapted to all the subjects chosen and that is why it must not be imposed in an artificial manner. The explanation of certain religious truths does not allow itself to be examined and judged. They must be explained. When this method is used, a start can be made by examining either the facts or the principles. Naturally in the course of the debate facts and principles will be mingled together.

Acknowledging the magnificent achievements and the practical training of this method, we cannot hide the fact that it has sometimes been the cause of indiscretion on the part of some members who wish to observe all situations too superficially and with curiosity and judge them too easily and rashly. Anything which might hurt the susceptibilities of members or persons must absolutely be avoided in following the enquiry method.

Other methods.

(1) *The question and answer*: For youngsters and simple people from whom we cannot expect great intellectual effort, the leader must prepare his subject under the form of questions and answers in a simple way. The question is put and the members are stimulated to give the right answer. It works on the psychology of the young who feel happy to be able to answer well. To impress the mind of those young people, examples must be presented to them. In this way the ideas do not remain abstract but are made sensible and concrete. This creates even in simple listeners the habit of reasoning.

(2) *The commentary of a passage of a book or an article*: If we find in a novel or in a magazine some lively passages from which some good resolutions can be taken, then the leader may study and prepare it and bring it to the meeting for discussion. If the story is interesting, all the members will pay great attention and the discussion will soon become very lively.

(3) *The use of a picture*: What an amount of instruction and conclusions can be drawn from a nice picture! The leader well prepared must make the personages of the picture speak and act. This is a good method for children.

(4) *The questionnaire*: The leader prepares a series of questions which are distributed to the members with the request to bring their answers at the next meeting. The questions must not be too simple nor too evident. They must make the members think and reflect. The questions, however, must be adapted to the mentality of the members. The expressions used to formulate them must not be complicated nor difficult to understand. It is advisable that the leader should read the questions when distributing them to the members and ask if they have understood them all. If need be, a short explanation can be given to put the members on the track. Besides making the members reflect to get the right answer, very often they will make the members discuss those questions at home with their family and so the influence of the circle will be extended. It compels the members also to express their thoughts clearly and the fact that they have to think and write down their answers makes them assimilate the question more easily.

(5) *The Question Box:* The questionnaire of which we spoke just above, is prepared by the leader and the answer is given by the members. The Question Box is not exactly the reverse but in great part it is so. The members write questions for which they would like to have an answer and they place them anonymously in a special box. The leader takes them after the meeting, studies them and brings them to the next meeting where he places them one after the other before the members and tries to get the right answer from all of them. The members should refrain from making any commentary or laughing at some queer questions which might have been placed, as this would hurt the susceptibility of the writer and probably prevent him from writing any more questions. This method, used now and then, gives an opportunity to the members who are rather shy and afraid to put verbal questions at the meeting, to ask for an answer for some points which interest them particularly or worry them. It is obvious that, should the leader find a question not opportune, he should not present that question at the meeting or if possible, the question should be changed and made presentable to the members.

(6) *The analysis of a book or novel:* It might be that a book or a novel has just been published and is being read by many. Is it good or bad? If it is known to be bad, the answer is easy — it must be banned. If indifferent or good, then a few meetings could be taken to analyse it and criticize it. Care must be taken, however, to see that the study circle of Catholic Action does not turn into a literary club.

To break the monotony of the circle the leader sometimes might read some interesting article of a review. This must be done seldom, but all the same the members must take a lively interest in it and discuss and draw out of it some good conclusion.

At other times the leader might place in front of the members a concrete problem but rather a difficult one, like a case of conscience. After explaining the point clearly at the meeting the leader asks the members to think over it and bring the solution at the next meeting.

We have given an idea of various methods so as to show how the study circle can be made interesting and lively. Whatever the method used, we must not lose sight of the point that the circle must train the members in the apostolate and must help them to think and to resolve. For this purpose to question all and often is one of the best means of success. The leader must not be afraid of repeating himself often and he should see that the ideas can be expressed in different ways by the members.

It must be remembered also that to be sure that members leave the meeting with some practical idea, the subject must always be summarized at the end of the meeting. The general lines of the subject are thus again repeated to the members.

Number of meetings: The meeting should be held preferably every week. If this seems too much for certain types of members, they could be held every fortnight. Monthly meetings are of very little profit. As a weekly meeting held week after week without break

over the course of a whole year is liable to become tiresome and heavy, it is preferable to divide the year into two or three terms, each with ten or twelve meetings to be held during those months when all the members can attend. Ten or twelve meetings per term attended regularly will do more good than uninterrupted meetings of the whole year. On no account should a meeting be cancelled or shortened to prepare for an entertainment or a concert or even a charity drive.

Length of the meetings: Not less than an hour and not more than an hour and a half.

Time: The time most suitable to all should be chosen. When fixed, regularity and punctuality should be insisted upon.

The place: Some propose holding it in the members' houses in turn. This is not always possible nor acceptable to all. It is preferable to have the meetings in a class room of the Parochial school or in a room put at the disposal of the members by the Parish Priest. It must be such a place that the members feel at home and free to express their views. A suitable place has a great influence on the atmosphere of the meeting.

Miscellaneous: Before closing the meeting the Ecclesiastical Assistant or the Leader will inform the members of any decision or resolution or any other matter which might have come from the Parochial or Diocesan Board of Catholic Action or give in short any news of interest or importance.

The Closing Prayer: The pledge can first be taken by all and then the closing prayer said for a special intention will bring the meeting to an end.

CHAPTER V

CATHOLIC ACTION THROUGH COORDINATION

The Existing Associations:

Long before Catholic Action was officially instituted as an organization of its own, as known today, there existed in the Church many religious activities and numerous associations, sodalities, etc., which performed some aspects of Catholic Action and which have proved to be most useful and efficient. Years of fruitful work testify to their utility.

Indeed, many Bishops and priests are proud of their Associations, greatly responsible for the maintenance and the increase of Christian life in their diocese and parishes. The faithful themselves who have been trained in those associations, are fondly attached to them and they rightly feel and justly fear any innovation which might give them, however slight, the impression that their Association will in any way suffer or be belittled.

It is but natural. The sentiment of preservation and conservation exists in every human being, not only for what concerns his own life, but also for the preservation and conservation of all which it includes and hence is dear to it.

The faithful, and by them we mean not only the layfolk but the clergy as well, are anxious that the existing religious associations, so well deserving of the Church, continue their splendid work and be neither absorbed nor amalgamated nor transformed and much

less put aside. A *via media* might be the safest way in wishing to establish Catholic Action in a diocese without hindering the existing associations.

Relation of Catholic Action with other Associations:

Is there antagonism or conflict between Catholic Action and other religious associations? In the works of God and those done for God there can neither be conflict nor opposition. All have one and the same aim: the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Means to reach the end might differ but they shall never be in conflict nor in opposition.

It is true that Catholic Action, as a lay apostolate, is as old as the Church, anterior to all other associations and hence with a right of priority. Catholic Action, as such, has undoubtedly a superiority over all the other associations because of two of its essential characteristics, i.e., (1) being universal in its purpose, namely embracing the entire and multiform apostolate of the Church; and (2) being an official organisation of the Church on account of the mandate it receives from the Hierarchy. But this superiority cannot be and is not to the detriment of the other associations.

Catholic Action will never ask, nor do anything which might endanger the life of the existing associations; on the contrary, following the advice of Pope Pius XI to the Bishops of Argentine, on 4th February 1931, it will "*make use of them while preserving their autonomy and special objects*". This is precisely the *via media* we can follow.

Is there any possibility of using the existing associations as organs of Catholic Action and at the same time preserve their autonomy and their special aim? Listen to Pius XI writing to Cardinal Bertram (18-11-1928):

> "Catholic Action is not a unique and exclusive form of action. On the contrary, it values and *coordinates* the works of all religious societies and associations, whether they be for the promotion of Christian piety, the formation of the young or for a social or economic end. By a judicious division of labour, Catholic Action controls the various groups of men, women and young people, thereby bringing to them its support and ensuring their progress; at the same time it will have the spiritual fruits which they already enjoy. Between them all it will establish mutual understanding and generate a goodwill in their relations which will be of great advantage to the Church and to Society."

Do not these words encourage '*Catholic Action through Coordination*' of the various existing societies and associations? But Pius XI has been more explicit on this very point. Writing to the Bishops of Argentine, in the letter we have already quoted, the Holy Father said:

> "We rejoice keenly along with you, that you make use of these worthy institutions to assist Catholic Action. This will happen all the more easily, if, as we hope, you *connect* them with Catholic Action, arranging the form of adhesion opportunely, so that they, preserving their own objectives and forms of organization, may cooperate effectively with Catholic Action."

The same Holy Pontiff had, so to say, given an order of collaboration and *coordination* of forces to the various associations when writing to Cardinal Segura (6-11-'29). He said:

> "We definitely state that all associations which conform with the rules of faith and the special objects of Catholic Action should follow the lead of the latter apostolate in all that pertains to its work, even though their principal object be social or economic."

What then of the religious associations and societies which have a spiritual and apostolic aim, like the Sodalities of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Legion of Mary and others?

Our readers might say that all these various associations have been called, valiant, true, providential, most precious *auxiliaries* of Catholic Action, and hence should remain as they are.

We reply: "What does the word '*auxiliary*' mean, if not in this case, cooperation, collaboration, coordination of action and activities?"

Cardinal Pacelli, now Pope Pius XII, writing to the General President of Catholic Action in Italy, said:

> "The aims of the *Auxiliary Works* and the indication given by the Holy See, especially in recent Pontificial letters, demand that a mutual goodwill and a cordial understanding reign between these works and Catholic Action; it demands also that mutual cooperation be promoted amongst them which simultaneously multiplies and coordinates their efficiency for the good of souls and for the welfare of the Church."

Pius XI, speaking to the Sodalities of Mary, said: "Our point is, that all these forms of good — the various associations existing in the Church — can and must help the central enterprises of Catholic Action." This can be best achieved by the *coordination* of all the existing Associations.

We think that all has been now solved and definitely settled by Pius XII in his "Apostolic Constitution on the Sodality of Our Lady". The Holy Father, using often terms expressed by his predecessors, writes:

> "Catholic Action is not confined within closed circle, hemmed in, as it were, by certain rigidly determined limits, that must not be transgressed, nor is it such that it pursues its object according to a special method and system so as to abolish or absorb the other active Catholic organizations. Rather it should consider as its duty to join them together, to unite them in a friendly manner, making the progress of one serve towards the advantage of the others, in all concord, union and charity. For as We have pointed out quite recently, in this excellent zeal for the apostolate, which meets with Our highest approval, there must be avoided the error made by a certain number who desire to reduce all that is done in the interests of souls, to a single pattern. Since this attitude must be considered completely alien to the mind of the Church, which is so far from approving such restriction on the growth and flowering of life whereby any apostolic work is entrusted to one single organization or to a single parish, that it actually favours a multiform unity in carrying out such works, by means of a brotherly cooperation, under the guidance of the Bishops and with their efforts united and directed to

one end. Such organisation will more easily obtain this harmonious agreement, ordered collaboration and mutual understanding, which We have recommended time and again when having put aside all controversy regarding priority, they love one another with brotherly affection with honour anticipating one another and have solely God's glory in view; they can rest assured that they will prevail more than others, when they have learned to give to them the first places."

Coordination of the Various Activities.

For Pius XI, Catholic Action was

> "the union of all the organised Catholic forces for the affirmation, diffusion, realisation and defence of Catholic principles, in the individual, family and social life, according to the teaching of the Church, the direction of the Holy See and in dependence on competent ecclesiastical authorities, outside and above party politics."

The essential characteristics of Catholic Action are four as we have seen at the beginning. It must be:

(a) an association of the laity,

(b) organised,

(c) with an apostolic aim,

(d) under a special mandate of the Bishop.

Examining all the existing religious associations or societies existing in the parishes and dioceses, we shall soon discover that all of them practically have the first three essential characteristics of Catholic Action, being nearly all of them organised lay associations with a spiritual and apostolic aim. What they need then to be

real organs of Catholic Action is the official mandate of the Hierarchy. Even if some of the existing associations were restricted to the personal sanctification of the members or only enaged in charitable and social work, by giving them the official mandate, they participate *ipso facto* in the apostolic aim of Catholic Action and hence they acquire immediately all the requisites to be also Catholic Action.

Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Doubts were entertained before by some people about the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Considered as being under the direction of the Superior-General of the Society of Jesus and not directly under the control and guidance of the Ordinary of the dioceses, they thought it could not be the official organ of Catholic Action in a diocese as it could not receive the official mandate ad hoc from the Ordinary. The Apostolic Constitution has solved the problem and clearly defined that

> " all Sodalities, with a dependence that may differ in minor matters, are subject to the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy not less than other organizations dedicated to the apostolate, whether they are allied to these, or to the central organization of Catholic Action. Moreover, since it is the duty of Sodalities, under the guidance and authority of their Pastors, to lend their aid to every other organization, it is not required that each Sodalist should also become a member of some other association." More definite still are the following sentences of the same Constitution: " Whether one considers the rules and purposes of the Sodalities of Our Lady or what they have achieved, there is no characteristic lacking

which belongs to Catholic Action since this is correctly defined, as Our Predecessor of happy memory Pius XI so often declared: 'the apostolate of the faithful who assist the Church and to a certain extent complete its pastoral work.' The structure and peculiar character of the Sodalities of Our Lady are no obstacle whatever to their being called with the fullest right "Catholic Action under the auspices and inspiration of the Blessed Virgin Mary."

The Legion of Mary.

Another doubt was also entertained about the Legion of Mary. It suffices to read and understand well the definition of the Legion of Mary, to realize and proclaim that the Legion of Mary is 'the soul of Catholic Action.' In fact the Legion of Mary is an Association of Catholics (a lay association) who, with the sanction of the Church (under the control and guidance of the Bishops) and under the powerful leadership of Mary Immaculate, mediatrix of all graces, have formed themselves into a Legion (organised lay association) for service in the warfare which is perpetually waged by the Church against the world and its evil powers (the apostolic aim).

The Legion of Mary is always at the disposal of the Bishop of the Diocese and of the Parish Priest for any apostolic work and Legionaries will never engage in any social service or Catholic Action work in a Parish without the sanction of the Parish Priest or of the Ordinary of the Diocese. The Legion of Mary possesses implicitly more than any other association, in virtue of its definition and rules, the four essential characteristics of

Catholic Action. A specific mandate can make it "the official organ of Catholic Action" in a diocese.

The official mandate.

What forbids an Ordinary in his diocese, after having carefully examined all the religious societies existing in his diocese to give them the official mandate, if he finds that they are already, by their very rules, auxiliaries of Catholic Action, and, as the Sodalities and the Legion of Mary, the soul of Catholic Action, *auspice Maria?* This mandate is most important. It makes the laity participate in the magnificent and universal apostolate of the Catholic Church Herself.

Writing to the faithful of the Archdiocese of Madras, in a Pastoral letter we said: "By giving the official mandate to all the above activities (i.e. those existing in the diocese), we do not intend to amalgamate them all in one body or in one association of Catholic Action. Let each Association or movement continue its own activities according to its statutes, aim and object, with their own direction and management as heretofore. We only wish a closer collaboration, as we are convinced that such collaboration will unite all the living forces of organised lay apostolate in a great effort and such unity will be the strength of each and all of these associations. It will also bring a much greater help to all the Parish Priests. Such coordination and collaboration will avoid risk of opposition and petty jealousy which would undermine the activities themselves. It will bring emulation among them, resulting in greater activity and more abundant fruits. It will

give us a powerful Diocesan Association of Catholic Action in a simple and easy way. It will also simplify for us the use of these movements in case of need, and, organized, as we shall just describe, it will facilitate our work and that of the various movements so coordinated together."

What coordination means.

Indeed it must be well understood that *coordination* is neither amalgamation nor absorption. Each association must, in the words of Pius XI, preserve its autonomy and special object, according to its rules. All the existing religious associations fit to be raised by the official mandate of the Ordinary to the rank of organs of Catholic Action, should be proud of such an honour and privilege of being associated in the apostolate of the Hierarchy. It gives them in the words of Pius XI, a guarantee of strength, a title of glory, an exceptional benefit and a pledge of incomparable merit. Adapting the words of Cardinal Pacelli to the General President of Catholic Action in Italy we can say: "As every Catholic must feel the need and duty of devoting himself or at least of contributing to the *Apostolic* work of Catholic Action, so must he feel the need and duty of *coordinating* himself, as far as possible, with the recognised organ of action, if he does not want to expose himself to the danger of rendering his work sterile, if not actually disturbing and injurious."

If this applies to private individuals what shall we say of religious associations and societies which, as such, are already auxiliaries of Catholic Action? It is then but natural and expedient that the associations which

are by their constitution auxiliaries of Catholic Action, without changing their form or constitution, but retaining their autonomy and special prerogatives, should link their activities with Catholic Action by coordinating their efforts and activities towards the apostolic aim of Catholic Action. *Vis unita fortior* — unity is strength.

The English Hierarchy in their joint pastoral letter of Pentecost 1934, in which they formally inaugurated the National Board of Catholic Action in England and Wales, gave to Catholic Action the following aim: "Catholic Action is then, a movement under the direction of the Hierarchy for *coordinating* the manifold activities of the numerous Catholic organizations which She has approved already for specific purposes, with a view to obtaining through mutual cooperation the best possible results. It does not contemplate interfering in any way with the autonomy and distinctive characteristics of these various religious organizations, each of which has its own particular objective and its own special appeal. It aims rather at *coordination* of effort and concerted action on the part of all Catholic societies towards a common end."

In France the official Catholic Action is constituted by the coordination of the existing works with a view to organising the activities of all the Catholics, thus securing the cooperation of all the laity in the apostolate of the Hierarchy.

Parochial Boards and Diocesan Councils.

This coordination can be brought about by the establishment of Parochial Boards and Diocesan Councils.

(a) *The Parochial Board** : To coordinate the various existing religious associations or societies in a parish, we need an organism of liaison or coordination. The organism is called Parochial Board or Parochial Council or Committee of Catholic Action as preferred. This Parochial Board of Catholic Action coordinates together all the initiatives, activities or campaigns undertaken for the good of souls by all the aggregate religious movements existing within the parish and to which the official mandate of organs of Catholic Action has been given by the Ordinary, without hindering, however, the objectives of each of the various associations.

The Parochial Board is composed of:

(1) The Parish Priest, or one of his Assistants appointed with the consent of the Ordinary, who will be Ecclesiastical Assistant;

(2) The President or the Prefect or a representative of each of the various religious associations or societies existing in the parish and in the Institutions within the Parish, which have received the official mandate of the Ordinary as recognised organs of Catholic Action;

(3) Such influential persons (men or women) of the Parish not coming under No. (2), but who animated by the spirit of Catholic Action through their influence and position might help the board. These are selected by the Parish Priest.

---

*See Appendix I-B.

The Parochial Board must work in close collaboration with the Diocesan Council. Mutual aid and sincere collaboration between the two are essential in order to oppose a vigorous resistance to the destructive evil forces at work in our days. The Parochial Board has its Statutes prepared or at least approved by the Ordinary.

(b) *The Diocesan Council** : To coordinate all the Parochial Boards of Catholic Action in a Diocese, we need also a link or an organism of coordination. This is called Diocesan Council or Board, or Committee of Catholic Action as preferred.

This Council has as its special function to coordinate, direct, promote and develop Catholic Action within the Diocese through the Parochial Boards with which it maintains close and regular relations, always respecting the characteristics, objectives and rules of each aggregate movement. This is ensured by the fact that, as we have seen for the members of the Parochial Boards, the members of the Diocesan Council of Catholic Action are taken from among the Presidents and the members of the various associations who have a personal interest in safeguarding the rights of their own organization.

The Diocesan Council is the link between the Parochial Boards and the National or Central Committee of Catholic Action, which in the words of Pius XI,

> "has, as its task, the guidance and orientation of the activities of associations in the entire nation, the suggesting of initiatives and the making of proposals to the Diocesan centres, subject, of

*See Appendix I-A.

course, to the right of the respective Bishops to supervise and approve."

Upon the close and sincere collaboration between the Parochial Boards and the Diocesan Council depend all the strength and all the efficiency of Catholic Action in the Dioceses. Pius XI insistently repeats that the utmost should be done to obtain and develop always more completely this union, which is the very proof and sign of true Catholic Action such as the Church wants it to be. (Pius XI to the Superior Council of Italian Catholic Action).

The Diocesan Council of Catholic Action consists of the following members:—

(1) The Diocesan Ecclesiastical Assistant appointed by the Ordinary;

(2) The Presidents of each of the Parochial Boards of Catholic Action;

(3) Such influential persons (men or women), selected and nominated by the Ordinary, who being animated by the spirit of Catholic Action and who owing to their competence and position might be of help to the Council.

The Diocesan Council must have its Statutes approved by the Ordinary.

Coordination and Unity of Action.

Catholic Action through the coordination of all the existing works seems to be the easiest and quickest way of establishing the organization of Catholic Action

permanently in dioceses and parishes. This is after all the model we have in "the Church itself in which in different degrees of its Hierarchy there necessarily and faithfully vibrates a unity of direction". (Osservatore Romano 12-1-1929).

Let us conclude with a last quotation of the Pope of Catholic Action, Pius XI, who has appealed to all men, women and young men to unite in a kind of militia to help in the sacred ministry of the Church by extending the reign of Christ. Addressing the Bishops the Holy Father said:

> "Cease not to labour in this spirit of unity for the welfare of our Holy Religion.... By uniting ever more closely the forces at your command you will impart to the Christian life in your country a greater vigour in the spirit of justice and charity, to the end that the reign among you of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, may be supreme and may abound in every blessing: The Peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ."

CHAPTER VI

CATHOLIC ACTION AND RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

The Co-operation of Religious Orders and Congregations.

Catholic Action being a lay organisation, Religious Congregations might be inclined to consider it as an activity outside their interest and field. It is not so. It will not be out of place to study here the relations and the co-operation of Religious Congregations and educational institutions with Catholic Action.

Writing to the Hierarchy of the Philippines (Feb. 1939), Pius XI said:

> "The priests (*and we hope the same will apply to the religious*) ought to consecrate themselves to this difficult task of the spiritual and practical preparation of the laity for Catholic Action".

On the 15th March 1936 the Secretary of State, Cardinal Pacelli, now Pope Pius XII, addressed, in the name of Pius XI, a letter to all the Superiors General of Religious Communities throughout the world, seeking their co-operation for establishing everywhere the providential movement of Catholic Action. The letter expressed the approval and the satisfaction of the Holy Father for

> "the generous spirit with which certain Orders and Religious Congregations, both of men and women, have put their members at the service of Catholic Action, who by writing, speaking and active assistance have helped its growth and assured its success". The letter voiced the

> hope of the Pope that the help given by religious communities in promoting Catholic Action "would be greater and more extensive than any other".

This new duty imposes on Religious new obligations which require training so as to be fit for the work.

> "This will certainly be so", continues the letter, "if special courses of study are instituted to prepare religious for these new tasks in order that by their preaching and manifold works of zeal, the faithful may be inspired and trained for the apostolate of Catholic Action. Since one of the standing contributions of religious is their preaching to the clergy especially during retreats, it is to be expected that, being thus better prepared, they will be able to inculcate expertly and authoritatively, together with the discharge of other priestly obligations, the duty of Catholic Action, a duty that the Holy Father, as early as his first encyclical, had declared to be 'among the principal responsibilities of a pastor of souls'. But assuredly no less valuable will be the help given by religious (under the most favourable conditions) in the education of youth, which is for the most part under their direction".

The letter concludes with an appeal saying:

> "If, then, all good religious will not only endeavour to direct their own prayer to this great objective, but will strive also to persuade and induce those under their spiritual care to pray for Catholic Action and enroll in it, then indeed their cooperation will be complete, and copious blessings will redound to Catholic Action and in fact to the whole Church. By conforming to these directions, religious will continue their

> glorious tradition of a generous readiness to respond to the needs of souls and to the wishes of the Vicar of Christ at the time so hazardous for youth, beset as it is by many enemies especially that of communistic propaganda. It will be an act of exquisite charity to collaborate in complete solidarity with the secular clergy for the spread of the Kingdom of Christ, which is the constant aspiration of the August Pontiff".

It is obvious, and it does not require many arguments to prove, that Religious Congregations have the duty of interesting themselves in Catholic Action and of promoting it with all the means at their disposal. In fact the aim or object of Religious Orders and Congregations is the sanctification of their members and to work for the establishment of the Kingdom of God by promoting His glory and assuring the salvation of souls. In his first encyclical letter 'Ubi Arcano' Pius XI, after asking the secular clergy to co-operate in the restoration of the Kingdom of Christ, refers to the regular clergy and says:

> "There is no need for Us to speak to you at length, Venerable Brethren, of the great hope we repose in the regular clergy for the carrying out the purpose We have put before Us, for you know, as We do, what great work they do for the glory of the Kingdom of Christ at home and for its extension abroad. For while the members of the religious families have this of their own, that they keep and carry out not only the precepts but the counsels of Christ, in religious contemplation and the enclosed silence of the cloister, or in the fervour of their mission in the world, they bring into life itself the highest ideals of Christian perfection, keeping alive

> among the Christian people the call to higher things, by the unfailing example of renunciation of earthly things and their own private affairs and interests, that they may enjoy spiritual things alone, true followers of Christ with His example ever before them, and gaining all the more success in this holy work by adding efforts of temporal and spiritual charity with help and healing remedies for all ills. In all this, as their records of history show, under the impulse of Divine Charity, preaching the Gospel for the salvation of souls in the missions, they (the regular clergy) have laid down their lives, expanding by their death the confines of the Kingdom of Christ by the propagation of unity of faith and Christian brotherhood ".

But in particular, the religious teaching congregations have to co-operate with Catholic Action, as they, more than many other institutions, can help in the Christian formation of the future leaders of Catholic Action among the youth who attend their institutions and who are thus trained by them.

The active collaboration with Catholic Action of all religious, but particularly of those engaged in teaching is not a simple desire of the Church but a demand which should be considered as a command.

CATHOLIC ACTION AND SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES :

Catholic Schools and Colleges, whether they be run by laymen or by religious, must be, like the parishes, the nurseries of Catholic Action and an essential requisite of its existence and recruiting. They must be the channels through which the spirit of Catholic Action penetrates into the minds of youth.

Pius XI in his encyclical "The Christian Education of Youth" said:

> "Whatever Catholics do in promoting and defending the Catholic Schools is a genuinely religious work, and therefore an important task of Catholic Action".

If the promotion and the defence of Catholic Schools is to be considered as an important task of Catholic Action, the work of teaching and education in those Schools must be a task of Catholic Action of at least as great if not greater importance. There is no doubt that the work of imparting Christian education is a noble task of Catholic Action. The mission of teaching is, after the priestly ministry, the mission that comes nearest to the great work of Catholic Action and to the Christian apostolate.

The work of the teaching Church and that of Catholic Action in general, are essentially a work of evangelisation and Christian education. The best co-operators in such a work are the teachers. The mission of a Christian teacher is that of Catholic Action, for the work of Catholic Action is a participation in the ecclesiastical office of teaching. Catholic teachers should be the natural apostles of Catholic Action.

The Religious Orders and Congregations which are conducting most of our schools and colleges, are by their very constitutions imbued with the spirit of the apostolate. They should then naturally infuse into the youth they train and educate that apostolic spirit which in our days every Christian must possess.

The letter of Cardinal Pacelli quoted above says:

> "The August Pontiff has insistently declared on various occasions that training in the apostolic spirit (the specific function of Catholic Action) is an essential element of education in these modern times, a strong safeguard of the Christian life; that moreover it is a special grace to be called to an apostolate so closely associated with that of the Priesthood. A wise educator cannot forget that; otherwise he would be limiting the horizons of good that should be opening before the generous souls of youth, he would be depriving the Church of precious auxiliaries, and he would scarcely attain all the purposes of a truly Christian education".

In many of our Schools, we are easily contented if we make of our pupils good and pious Christians; but this is not sufficient. At the present day we need apostles: "it is necessary that all be apostles", and hence in the Schools and Colleges, the Priest, the lay-brother or the Sister, as well as the Catholic lay-teacher, all must infuse, in the mind and in the heart of the pupils they educate, the apostolic spirit, which they, as religious and teachers, must possess and which must pervade all Catholic teaching.

Consciously, youth, seeing in their zealous teachers living examples of the spirit of Catholic Action will become naturally Catholic-Action-minded and will soon turn into apostles to their like.

This lays a heavy responsibility on those who have the mission to educate, and not only to instruct, the country's youth. "Never was there a time when Catholic influence was more sorely needed in all phases

of our social and individual life than the present, when the whole world is upset and troubled. The old order changes. Where shall we find light and leadership out of the darkness if not in the ideals of Catholic Action, especially in our Schools ?" (Goodman).

The atmosphere of the School itself gains by such a training. Let us quote again Cardinal Pacelli's letter :

> "On the other hand, this training contributes to the improvement of the school itself. No one can deny the incalculable good that will come from the mutual good example of students, from the activity of winning over more careless students, from the effort to transform the everyday life of the school into a more active preparation for the work that the students will undertake in Catholic Action organisations during vacation or after graduation".

The students begin, unconsciously, through their good example, the apostolate of the like to the like.

> "Thus", continues the letter, "they will be found much better equipped to overcome the many grave dangers of modern social life, to which, as is well known, youth educated in a Catholic School have often been victims".

How to Organise Catholic Action in Schools and Colleges.

As in schools and colleges we organise purely religious associations like the Apostleship of Prayer, Sodalities and other associations, so we can also organise in them groups of Catholic Action. Study Clubs* could

*See Appendix I-C.

easily be run in Schools, and these are excellent means for the formation of leaders. 'The Cell Technique' must be studied and cells should be started in institutions and schools. This is one of the best means to form future apostles and at the same time to create in these institutions a healthy atmosphere and the uplifting influence of good example. It would surely benefit the institutions if emphasis were laid on making true and real Christians of their pupils rather than on concentrating their efforts on securing brilliant results in the examinations. Surely, a thorough Christian education, with the object of turning out capable leaders and apostles, would give us better students without the least prejudice to examination results.

Let us quote again Cardinal Pacelli's letter :

> "The Holy Father has in the past recommended the establishment of *Internal Associations* such as are happily flourishing in a number of institutions, and also that the pious societies already under the care of religious be stimulated to offer to Catholic Action their providential assistance either by prayer, or by making known the excellence, the necessity, the advantages of Catholic Action, or by exhorting and guiding their own members to it. This is especially desirable for organisations and societies that unite young people for the purpose of preserving the fruits of Christian education ".

Centres of Catholic Action for Young Students.

On several occasions Pius XI stressed the necessity of establishing Catholic Action organisations not only in universities and public schools but in every secondary

school and home of education and even in elementary schools and academies.

Writing to the Brazilian Hierarchy (27th October, 1935) the Holy Father said :

> "train boys and girls for Catholic Action from earliest youth in their schools and academies".

On 14th February 1934, Pius XI writing to the Hierarchy of Columbia said :

> "The future is in the hands of the young and particularly of young students. We must take a special interest in them so as to stir up in their souls, through proper instructions and religious practice, that conviction and enthusiasm for the great and holy interests of the Church, which, being their refuge and safeguard in the midst of the passions of youth, will ensure to Catholic Action, excellent leaders and able militants for future conquests. It is not enough that centres of Catholic Action appear near universities and secondary public schools ; these centres must grow and multiply in all schools and colleges and in all educational institutions, where youth in effect must be educated, prepared for and directed towards Catholic Action in view of their future participation in this organisation. This will be a beautiful complement to their Christian education".

University Students.

As regards university students let us quote the letter to the Hierarchy of the Philippines. Pius XI says :

> "The University students, of whom there are so many in the Philippines, deserve special attention from Catholic Action. They, in fact, repre-

sent the future leaders of society in the various fields of culture, commerce, industry and public affairs. But, unfortunately, during this formative period of their lives, they are often exposed to grave dangers. It may seem a very great and difficult undertaking to try to penetrate and exercise a salutary influence in University life, but the very difficulty of the task should be an incentive to set out on this work with great generosity of heart, and a complete abandonment to the help of divine grace, which can triumph over all obstacles. For, indeed, experience has shown us that ardent young people with an apostolic spirit, even in the midst of a crowd of indifferent and sometimes ill-disposed persons, can by their virtues and open profession of faith, little by little, become centres of attraction to their fellow-students, and apt instruments for the salvation of souls.

"It is therefore, of great importance that associations of students shall be established in every centre of higher studies, which will strive not only to form perfect Christians, who will be faithful to Christian moral principles in the exercise of their profession, but likewise active apostles in their own sphere of life".

What about Schools and Institutions for Girls?

It is obvious that all that has been said up to now applies not only to the institutions, colleges or schools for boys, but also to those where girls are educated. The Sisters have a duty towards Catholic Action. It will suffice to quote a few pronouncements of the Holy See on the matter. On two occasions Cardinal Laurenti, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Religious, referred to the relations between the teaching of Con-

gregations of Sisters and the Catholic Action organisation.

The first time it was in a letter dated 1-3-1924, addressed to the President of the Catholic Young Women of Italy, on the occasion of a circular sent by the President herself to the Religious Superiors of various educational Institutions for Girls in Italy. This circular had been written with a view to obtain from them remarks and suggestions so as to facilitate a greater union and collaboration between Catholic Action and the various teaching Congregations.

After expressing the wishes of the Holy Father whose desire it is to see a harmonious collaboration between Catholic Action and the splendid apostolate of education exercised by the teaching religious Orders, His Eminence continued :

> " The Sisters will continue, in conformity with their sublime mission, to busy themselves principally with the Christian formation of the souls of the children entrusted to their care : their action, however, will be completed, as it should, by the organisation of Catholic Action which will give these young souls greater vigour to resist the dissolving forces of their environment and will equip them better for an apostolate in the world ".

Does not this show that in the education of girls, the religious institutes of teaching Sisters too, are bound to pursue the twofold aim of Catholic Action, namely, the sanctification of the young, and their training in the apostolate ?

The second time His Eminence wrote was on the occasion of an audience, granted to the same Cardinal Laurenti by His Holiness Pope Pius XI on the 11th of January 1927. His Holiness had expressed the wish that a letter be sent to the General Chaplain of the Catholic Women's Union of Italy, with the request that it be communicated to all the Superiors General, provincial and local, of the teaching Religious Orders for girls. The letter asked that the Superiors allow the General Chaplain or other Chaplains of the said Union, who had been selected by common consent, to give to the religious Sisters, according to their convenience, technical instructions on Catholic Action, by explaining its organisation, its nature and aim, with a view to obtain more easily the desired collaboration.

> "In order", says His Eminence, "that the work of education done with so much zeal and fruit in the schools and institutions directed by the Sisters of various institutes, be in better harmony with the programme outlined by the Holy Father for Catholic Action, it is necessary that the Superiors of the teaching Religious Orders know more exactly and completely than is usually the case, the programme and the functioning of this organisation".

On the 27th of June 1930, His Eminence Cardinal Lepicier, who had become the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of Religious addressed a letter to His Lordship Mgr. G. Serafin, the General Chaplain of the Catholic Women's Union of Italy. His Eminence refers to the two previous letters sent by his predecessor Cardinal Laurenti, which we have just quoted. He expressed the satisfaction of the Holy Father at the sight of the

ever-growing co-operation extended by the teaching Congregations of Sisters to Catholic Action.

The Cardinal writes:

"To make this collaboration more consistent and efficacious we wish to insist on the recommendations already made in the letter of 21-3-1927 quoted above, namely, that particular instructions regarding Catholic Action, its nature, aim and statutes be given to the Sisters who are engaged in education and moreover that a certain number of them received (as it is done for so many other branches of the apostolate and of Christian charity) a specialized formation with particular attention to a higher catechetical instruction adapted to their profession as Christian educators of youth. As regards the ways and means to be used for instruction in all those particular subjects, these will be found in the abundant literature on Catholic Action".

The letter continues:

"If we acquire such a knowledge of Catholic Action, which is indispensable to anybody engaged in educating youth, and if we attain the unity of direction which flows naturally from the organisations of Catholic Action, established on a parochial, diocesan and national basis, the results cannot but be consoling, first for Catholic Action itself which will gain new and well-trained recruits and also for the Sisters themselves for they will find a new field open to their zeal and generous devotedness; they will see the fruits of their education well assured when their pupils leave the school and enter the dangers of the world; they will finally obtain new vocations for their institutes as we have had the pleasure of pointing out before".

The Contemplative Orders.

Is this collaboration restricted to teaching orders ? The same letter we have just quoted concludes :

> " We do not limit our request to the teaching Sisters, but we address all nuns without distinction, even those who devote themselves exclusively to the contemplative life, begging from them the supernatural help of their prayers and sacrifices ".

Let us conclude.

If Catholic Action is a duty of Christian life, it follows logically that the preparation to Christian life must be a preparation for Catholic Action. Those then who have the duty of preparing Youth for Christian life must prepare it for Catholic Action. To ensure consistency and stability of Catholic Action it must be prepared technically and that preparation must begin with the youth in schools and colleges. There is no better time to train the youth for the apostolate than in their school or college days, when good habits are easily acquired and the right orientation for their after-life can successfully be given them.

The future of Catholic Action depends on its preparation and this must begin with youth so that when leaving the school or the college they will be prepared to face with greater courage the difficulties of life and, being trained in the apostolate, they will safeguard themselves from dangers, and influence others for the best by their example and zeal.

PART III

CATHOLIC ACTION IN PRACTICE

CHAPTER I

THE PRACTICAL REALIZATION OF CATHOLIC ACTION

A General Remark.

From the various methods of Catholic Action we have presented in Chapter II, Part II, it is clear that Catholic Action, in its concrete form, is not a thing made according to set pattern. There is no standard method of Catholic Action. It develops according to the needs and circumstances of the time and place where it has to operate, as well as from the inspired leadership of some who devote their lives to the aim and purpose of Catholic Action. This gives a splendid variety of work and allows an amount of beautiful adaptations for every place.

Pius X expressed this thought in *'Il fermo proposito'* when he said :

> "The Church, in the long course of her history, has ever and always displayed most clearly that she possesses a marvellous power of adapting herself to the variable conditions of human intercourse, so much so, that provided no injury be done to changeless faith and the moral law, or to her sacrosant rights, she readily and flexibly adapts herself in all that is contingent and accidental, to the changes of the times and to the new needs of society."

So the organized structure of Catholic Action has had and will always have that same elasticity of adaptation to times and places as the Church in her exterior

form. This prerogative will make the movement always up-to-date, adapted to the needs of times and circumstances; a wonderful prerogative of the Church and her works!

> "The Church has two remarkable prerogatives: a firmness, an immutability that have ever been the despair of those who range themselves against her and always will do so, because there are lines traced by the hands of God, so that the Church can say: 'Thus far and no farther', and together with this immutability, she enjoys a no less remarkable adaptability to all circumstances whence some good for souls may be achieved, for, that is the supreme end of the Church herself." (Pius XI, 26-5-1926, to the representatives of the Diocesan Committees of Catholic Action in Italy).

This has to be well understood as it clears many misconceptions and misunderstandings. Some, in fact, do not take much interest in Catholic Action because they confine it to certain methods which they do not like or approve. Others, on the contrary, stick to rigid methods and cannot agree to, nor approve of any other. For them the authentic type of Catholic Action is the one which follows their approved method and no other. This betrays lack of vision. Catholic Action admits of no boundaries.

Preliminary Knowledge.

In the light of what we have just said, in carrying out the practical organization of Catholic Action, we need, before starting in any given direction, to have a clear idea of several points:

(1) We must know the nature, aim and principles of Catholic Action;

(2) We must have some notion of the various methods and works of Catholic Action organized in other countries so as to know how it works elsewhere;

(3) We must have a good knowledge:

(a) of the needs of the country or of the place where Catholic Action has to be established;

(b) of the circumstances prevailing in the place;

(c) of the temperament of the people;

(d) of the possibility; and

(e) of the opportunities afforded in the place and by the people.

Pius X in his Encyclical '*Il fermo proposito*' says:

> "In order that Catholic Action may be effectual on all points, it is not enough that it be adapted to actual social needs only; it ought also to be invigorated by all the practical methods furnished at the present day by progress in social and economic studies, by experience already gained elsewhere, by the condition of civil society and even by the public life of States."

The Second Step.

Being well acquainted with the various points we have just presented, we must carefully consider:

(a) whether we wish to establish the association of Catholic Action as a separate organization on the pattern

of the Italian association as described in Chapter II, Part II and consider the existing associations as purely auxiliaries of Catholic Action;

(b) whether it is advisable to start with a Catholic Action Board which will co-ordinate all the various existing associations giving them the mandate and bringing them into harmony with the aim of Catholic Action as described in Chapter V Part II where we spoke of Catholic Action through Co-ordination;

(c) whether it is preferable to begin with a select few and start a group of specialized Catholic Action or a Catholic Action Cell as described in Chapter III Part II.

A. *A separate organization.*

If the first method is preferred, namely the establishment of a separate organization of Catholic Action comprising the four groups of men, women, boys and girls following the pattern of the Italian Catholic Action, then the Statutes of the Italian Catholic Action can be taken and followed without much difficulty.

B. *Catholic Action Boards:*

If the second idea is to materialize, namely, the formation of Catholic Action Boards or Councils in the parishes and in the diocese, to co-ordinate all the existing associations, then rules must be prepared giving organic form to these boards, showing their activities and their relations with the other associations. Each Ordinary should then establish parochial boards or councils of Catholic Action and unite them under the Diocesan Board or Council.

(1) *Parochial Board** :

A practical way of establishing the associations of Catholic Action in the parishes could be as follows :

(a) The Ordinary draws up short and comprehensive statutes indicating the name of the association, its nature and aims, means and activities, conditions and the formalities of enrolment, the duties of the office-bearers as well as the relation of the association with the other parochial organizations.

(b) The Statutes are then communicated to the Parish Priests and a diocesan Ecclesiastical Assistant is appointed to promote the establishment of Catholic Action Associations in the parishes.

(c) The Parish Priests select from among the office-bearers of the various existing associations within their parish one or more from each and so form a group of persons, outstanding by their exemplary life and capable of acting as the spiritual leaven in the parishes with entire submission to Ecclesiastical direction.

(d) After some preliminary meetings and instructions on the spirit and aim of the Association, the Ordinary, on favourable advice of the parish priests and the Diocesan Ecclesiastical Assistant, erects the parochial board of Catholic Action in each Parish and provides in conformity with the Statutes for its formal inauguration.

(2) *The Diocesan Board.*†

When a sufficient number of parochial boards have come into existence in a diocese, the diocesan board or

---

*See Appendix I-B.

†See Appendix I-A.

council is also inaugurated and the whole Diocesan Association is thus in full working order.

Well-formed parochial boards will create well-established diocesan boards and these will form a strong and efficient National Centre from which direction will come to strengthen and unite all for greater work.

C. *Specialised Catholic Action.*

A third way to establish an association of Catholic Action is to begin with small specialised groups in every parish and centre. It follows the Cell technique.

The Cell consists of a small group of people of the same age, same sex, same occupation, same social position and mentality, gathered under the guidance of an expert Ecclesiastical Assistant or Chaplain. Start then with a group of two or three young boys or girls (not mixed) studying in the same school, college or institution, or working in the same factory, office or shop, and have your first Cell. Take a concrete need; put it before the few; arouse them to action by infusing in them the idea of conquest and apostolate and work up your group. Have your regular fortnightly study circles or meetings following one of the methods suggested when speaking of 'Study Circles' Chapter IV Part II. If the few are of the right stuff, they will soon bring others and more Cells will be formed. Soon you will have leaders who will be the leaven to raise more groups or Cells and even the mass. You must start among grown up people too. The Cell technique is the method used by Our Lord Jesus Christ who started with a few apostles. It is the method followed by nature, for life

springs from a living cell and grows slowly but uniformly. The Cell technique is a means and not an end. It aims at giving a true Christian life to its members; it aims at making of them such good and exemplary Christians that they feel the need of radiating Christ, of being Apostles and of influencing and conquering the environment in which they live. Urged on by the apostolic spirit they are all out for the conquest of the like by the like.

The Best Method.

At this stage we may ask ourselves one question: Which of these methods is the best, or to be preferred?

The best method is the one which gives the best results. All the methods are good and are sure of yielding good results provided they are well started and well conducted. The world has to be christianized; Society has to be re-christianized. The forms of evangelization are many and varied. The various and numerous Religious Orders in the Church show what a variety of means and ways the Church possesses for her apostolate. It needs a study of the circumstances and possibilities and the best method will be that which under these circumstances and with these possibilities, gives the best results.

There is no special mould. Adaptability and elasticity according to circumstances, places and needs, gives the movement the best chance of success. There is only one aim: the glory of God and salvation of souls. To reach that end, all means blessed by God and His representatives are good.

One-sighted or prejudiced views on this point would be most dangerous. The beautiful attribute of God's Immensity Who sees all, always so broadmindedly, must be our guidance.

HOW TO START ORGANIZING CATHOLIC ACTION GROUPS.

This is an important point, because a good beginning means already half of the work done.

A campaign of propaganda within the parish should be one of the items previous to the establishment of the association. It should consist in the distribution of pamphlets and of sermons on Catholic Action.

Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum in vanum laboraverunt qui aedificant eam — unless the Lord built the house, they labour in vain that build.

Catholic Action, being a highly spiritual movement, needs prayers and hence those who wish to establish Catholic Action Associations in their dioceses or in their parishes must, before engaging themselves in that work, pray, and ask others to pray, so that the Sacred Heart of Jesus may bless their endeavours and may enlighten them in organizing such associations and in selecting fit members.

The selection of members has indeed a great importance. It must be done well. It is most important "*to seek diligently, to select prudently and train suitably those lay apostles*" says Pope Pius XI in 'Quadragesimo Anno'. There should not be any hurry to enlist a great number at the beginning. The process must be slow;

the growth must be gradual. *Natura non facit saltus — Nature does not proceed by leaps.*

The notion of the work and the responsibility it brings with it must be very clear in the mind of those who start the movement as well as in those who join in it at the very beginning. The ways and means to be used should be carefully studied. A false step at the beginning might jeopardise the whole movement.

A retreat (closed retreat for a few) would be a splendid preparation. The constitution or the statutes prepared by the Ordinary are then presented to the selected members and the work begins 'In nomine Domini.'

CHAPTER II

THE DIRECTIVE ORGANS OF CATHOLIC ACTION

There are two directive organs in Catholic Action: the Hierarchy (the Pope, Bishops and Parish Priests) called the higher direction or the exterior hierarchy, and the Laity called the subordinate direction or the interior hierarchy of Catholic Action.

Catholic Action by its very definition is a work depending on and subordinate to the Hierarchy and hence is subject to the general direction of the Hierarchy. On the other hand, it is action by the laity; members of the laity are the office-bearers, organisers and executives of Catholic Action. Hence the immediate direction as regards plans and programmes comes from the laity themselves.

Office Bearers:

In the practical execution of Catholic Action the following persons are those who guide and direct or assist the Association and the members. They are the office-bearers of the various boards or councils:

(1) The Ecclesiastical Assistant;

(2) the President;

(3) the Vice-President;

(4) the Secretary;

(5) the Treasurer;

(6) the Councillors.

Excepting the Ecclesiastical Assistant, all the Office-bearers are lay people. There is no need to stress the point that the lay office-bearers must be, in their public as well as in their private life, exemplary christians.

It is easily understood that those who are chosen to guide, direct and assist the Association must first realize in themselves the programme of Catholic Action; they must be people *of Prayer, of Action,* and *of Sacrifice.* They must know what Catholic Action is and what the Church expects from them as members of the organisation. They must realize that they are leaders and as such they must lead others chiefly by example and not by words only.

Verba movent, exempla trahunt — men are influenced by words but drawn by deeds.

They must foster unity and charity among the members as well as submission to the constituted authority. They must be pious, humble and charitable. Such qualified people only and no others must be chosen as office-bearers. Experience shows, as Pius XI said, that "the success of every enterprise stands or fails by the leaders." (To Card. Patriarch of Lisbon, 10-11-1933).

In this Chapter we shall speak only of the Delegate of the Church, '*the soul of the Association.*' He may be called Ecclesiastical Assistant, Ecclesiastical Adviser, Spiritual Director or Chaplain of Catholic Action. We shall deal with the lay office-bearers in the various drafts of statutes which we give in the appendices.

The Ecclesiastical Assistant.

An organisation like a body needs a soul. Pope Pius XI writing to Mgr. Perdomo (14th Feb., 1934) regarding the Ecclesiastical Assistant says, that they

> "must be the soul of the associations, source of energy, inspirers of apostolate, the representatives of the authority of the Bishops, and, while leaving to the laity the leadership and the responsibility of the associations themselves, they must safeguard the faithful and constant application of the principles and the rules established by the Hierarchy of the Church".

In every diocese, wherever possible, there should be a full time Diocesan Ecclesiastical Assistant or Diocesan Chaplain for Catholic Action. Then only will Catholic Action grow and flourish in the diocese.

His task will be to establish and spread Catholic Action in the diocese, to promote initiatives, give advice, discover those priests and lay leaders in the diocese who are best fitted to promote Catholic Action in the parishes and institutions.

Cardinal Pizzardo speaking to the Diocesan Chaplains of Catholic Action on 15th September 1930, said: "Given the nature of Catholic Action, it is clear that the priest, in the exercise of his normal functions, as assistant (chaplain) is and really must be the soul of the association, the inspiration of good enterprises, the source of zeal and the fashioner of consciences. Moreover, in men's associations, which are the solid skeleton of Catholic Action, seeing that their Associates by the very force of their age, are the better prepared for the

Catholic Action tasks, the normal functions of their assistant must be such as not to diminish energies and responsibilities, for it is right that these be left to the Directors. But somewhat different must be the normal action of the Assistant in 'youth' Associations. Here he possesses especially a formative task of the highest importance, and accordingly his action should be more ample, more intimate, more intense."

Pius XI at the same time, addressing the Diocesan Chaplains told them :

> "The aim of the manifold work of the assistant is to help in every way, by every method, but above all by means of holiness and example in the formation of aids for the apostolate, that is, laymen able to come to the help of the apostolate of the Bishops. Substantially then, the assistants must set before themselves the task of training lay apostles. What was the great mission of Jesus Christ, if not to prepare Apostles ? He spent three years over this preparation, and everything that preceeded was, so to say, preparing for the preparation, i.e., for the formation of the apostles." Some time previously on the 25th October, 1924, speaking to the Chaplains of the Young Men's Society of Lazio, the Holy Father had said : "Like the Archangel (Raphael) the Ecclesiastical Assistant takes upon himself the formation and the guidance of youth, and like him, follows their steps affectionately and untiringly and watches their goings, ready always to protect them by example and advice, eyes turned to the light, listening ever to the voice which at all times and at every need makes itself heard through him from the Throne of Truth, the Chair of St. Peter."

Archbishop Joseph Charbonneau, in his Pastoral Letter on Catholic Action says: "Once the leaders and militant members are found, the chaplain has a double duty to fulfil toward them: *to train them in the apostolate and to guide their action.*

"When we say that the Chaplain should guide the action of the laity, we do not mean thereby to affirm that his role consists in domineering over Catholic Action, in giving orders of which the laity should be only the faithful executors, without any responsibility on their part. On the contrary, the leadership and the responsibility of Catholic Action belong to the laity themselves. The chaplain's duty is to quicken this leadership, to inspire it, so that it may conform to the directions of the Hierarchy, while leaving to the lay directors the care of organizing their action in the manner which they judge best for the improvement of their milieu. We do not however, wish to give the impression that, in order to respect the nature of Catholic Action, the chaplain might be considered by the laity as someone outside, who watches over their activity from a distance and who intervenes only to use his veto in case of extreme danger. No, the chaplain is an integral part of the Committee, he works 'with' the lay directors. He directs 'with' them, but not without them. He directs the movement by animating and inspiring it, and not merely by arbitrating from the outside. They direct as responsible organizers and achievers, and not as mere executors."

And further on, the same Archbishop says: "The Chaplains must never lose sight of the fact that his role

is, above all, that of training true apostles animated by the very spirit of Christ, the Saviour. He will play this part, not so much by long sermons as by his attitude and by his Christian manner of judging, with the leaders, the various situations. To help them in discovering the real state of the milieu and the influences which have free play therein, in order to make the best use of the good influences and to transform the bad, such shall be his constant concern.

" A knowledge, as accurate as possible, of the milieu as well as of the slightest reactions of the leaders, is indispensable to the chaplain of Catholic Action. Without that, how could he sustain them efficaciously in their inevitable weaknesses? How could he understand, govern, and restrain without suffocating it, their enthusiasm which will sometimes be astonishing to him but always so necessary and beneficent for them ? "

Really an association will be what its chaplain makes of it. There is no doubt that the success of Catholic Action depends much from the Ecclesiastical Assistant.

> " Catholic Action depends much from the Ecclesiastical Assistants, in regard to the share entrusted to each: 'my lot is in thy hands.' " (Pius XI, 30th Jan. 1932).

CHAPTER III

MANNER OF CONDUCTING THE MEETINGS

1. *The purpose of meetings :*

An Association without meetings is a body without strength. Meetings are proofs of vitality.

(1) they are an indication of the activity of the association ;

(2) they are the power-house which gives light and energy ;

(3) they contribute to the formation of the members ;

(4) they help to form the apostolic spirit and create enthusiasm ;

(5) they are a means to maintain and strengthen discipline ;

(6) they unite the members and make them feel that they are a strong and living body.

The meetings can be :

(1) restricted to organising work, i.e., when they deal only with the objects and activities of the association ;

(2) formative, i.e., instructive and educative ;

(3) mixed (which is generally the case), i.e., when members attend the meetings where directions and instructions are given ;

In other words meetings consist of two parts:

(1) information and

(2) formation.

2. *Various kinds of meetings*:

(1) There are *National Meetings*, that is of the whole country, gathering experts and enthusiastic members of Catholic Action who wish to improve their knowledge and become leaders in the movement. These meetings require special attention and special preparation. We do not deal with this kind of meetings here.

(2) *Inter-Diocesan and Diocesan Meetings* where members of the Diocesan Councils of various Dioceses or of the Parochial Boards of one or more Dioceses meet to exchange views and to combine their forces. These are general meetings and can be prepared on the lines we shall suggest for such meetings.

(3) *The Diocesan Executive Council and the Diocesan Council Meetings*, where the office-bearers or all the members of the Diocesan Council meet and discuss the various problems and aspects of Catholic Action and Missionary Action in the Diocese.

(4) *The Parochial Executive Committee and Parochial Board Meetings* where all the members or only the office-bearers of the Parochial Boards meet.

(5) *General Meetings of various Parishes or Associations* which meet for a special purpose or an annual rally.

3. *Length of meetings* :

(1) General meetings should not last more than two hours and a half and should be rare.

(2) Ordinary meetings should not last more than an hour.

The Statutes define the limit of time. Long dragged out meetings are fatal to any association.

4. *Time of the meetings* :

(1) For general and occasional meetings the time and date are fixed by the President in charge in consultation with the authorities.

(2) For ordinary meetings a suitable time on week days should be chosen. They should be arranged so as not to conflict with the meetings of the other parish societiies. When the time is chosen, regularity and punctuality must be insisted upon.

5. *Place of the meetings* :

(1) For general meetings, the place is fixed each time by the President in charge in consultation with the authorities.

(2) For the ordinary meetings, a fixed place must be chosen ; it must be convenient to all and attractive. Accommodation must be there for all so that all can follow the meeting.

6. *Attendance at the meetings:*

Regular attendance for the members of any group is a sacred duty. For the sake of future stability, all the members of the various councils and boards should be made to give a solemn promise of regular attendance.

7. *The get-up of the meeting place:*

A supernatural atmosphere must reign during the meetings, hence the environment must be a help to that. The aim of Catholic Action is to bring all souls to the feet of Christ. Our Divine Lord must preside at the meetings and His image must have the place of honour.

The Statue of the Sacred Heart or of Christ the King must be placed on a table or stand, neatly arranged and decorated; two lighted candles and a vase of flowers should be put in front of the statue. The President and the office-bearers take their seat round a special table covered with a green cloth possibly, and the Papal flag hanging on the front side of the table. At the official meetings of Catholic Action, all the members should always wear the Catholic Action Badge; the office-bearers, their own distinctive ribbon under the badge.

The banner of Catholic Action must have its prominent place on an elevated stand behind the President's chair.

8. *Order of the meetings:*

For general and mass meetings we give further on the order to be followed:

For ordinary meetings of the Diocesan Council and Parochial Boards, the following order shall be followed:

(1) The Opening Prayer (See 'Ritual' further on).

(2) A short spiritual thought by the Ecclesiastical Assistant so as to give a supernatural tone to the meeting at the very beginning. If the Ecclesiastical Assistant is not present, the President can read a passage of the Gospel or an extract from some spiritual book.

(3) The reading of the minutes of the last meeting which are then signed by the President and the Secretary.

(4) The reports of activities from the special committees, if any have been formed, or from members, if they have been entrusted with some special work concerning Catholic Action or Missionary Action.

(5) A short interval during which attendance is taken; the book where the names of those present are entered, is then placed at the foot of the statue of the Sacred Heart as a token of loyalty.

(6) The 'Divine Praises' as given in the 'Ritual'.

(7) A short speech (lecture or conference), on a particular subject which is then discussed by the members after obtaining permission from the President.

(8) The resolution proposed and passed. These are entered scrupulously in the Minutes Book.

(9) Proposals by the members.

(10) Communications and remarks by the President. The President communicates any instruction or directive received from the Centre or from the Diocesan Council or any order received from the Ordinary or the Parish Priest and gives a short account of the work done, so that all the members may know the activities of the Association.

(11) Any other business or miscellaneous matters.

(12) The Ecclesiastical Assistant calls upon the President to read the Catholic Action Pledge in which all present join.

(13) Closing prayers as per 'Ritual'.

MASS OR GENERAL MEETINGS

Well prepared and organised general meetings, where all the members of the various Associations existing in the Parish or in the Diocese gather together for a common purpose, must bear abundant fruit. Such gatherings unite all the parishioners together, acquaint them more with the aim of Catholic Action and infuse enthusiasm into them for the common cause.

The President of the Parochial Board, if the general meeting concerns only the parish, or the President of the Diocesan Council, if the general meeting concerns part of or all the parishes of the Diocese, in consultation with his Council and with the consent of the Ordinary, draws up a programme for the general meeting. He prepares also the agenda which has to be approved by

the Parish Priest if the meeting is restricted to the Parish or by the Ordinary if the meeting embraces several Parishes.

The order of the meeting shall then be as follows :

(1) A hymn suitable to the circumstances.

(2) The opening prayer (see 'Ritual' as given further on).

(3) The President's speech (He gives the reason of the meeting; its special objective and announces the programme of the meeting).

(4) A brief lecture or talk on Catholic Action or Missionary Action by the Ecclesiastical Assistant.

(5) A speech well prepared by an appointed speaker on the objective of the general meeting and finishing with some practical resolutions to be passed.

(6) The reports of the various activities of the different associations in the Parish. (These reports should not take more than five minutes. They are important as they show to the whole parish or diocese, the work done by the various units. This proceeding acts also as a stimulant for these associations).

(7) The passing of the resolutions.

(8) A break of ten minutes could be allowed if the meeting lasts more than an hour and a half, during which a well-prepared choir could sing.

(9) After the resolutions are passed, or after the break — if this take place — all recite alternatively 'the Divine Praises'.

(10) The Secretary reads any communication which might have come either from the Central or the Diocesan Council of Catholic Action.

(11) The closing exhortation by the Ecclesiastical Assistant.

(12) Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament if possible.

(13) The Pledge of Catholic Action.

(14) Concluding prayers.

(15) The hymn "We Stand for God."

CHAPTER IV

THE INSIGNIA, THE PATRON SAINT AND THE FEAST OF CATHOLIC ACTION

I. THE EMBLEMS OF CATHOLIC ACTION

The emblems or the insignia of the Association are :

(1) The Badge ;

(2) The Banner ; and

(3) The Enrolment Card.

Every Association has its symbolic or exterior signs by which it can be recognised ; the army has its flag and the soldiers have their uniform.

1. *The Badge* is the exterior sign and the symbol by which each member shows that he belongs to the Association and adheres to its programme. It takes the place of the uniform of the soldiers. It is an outward testimony of his Christian convictions, and as such it is a means of apostolate. It serves as a public profession of faith and as a safeguard against human respect. It is also a means for the members to distinguish those who belong to the Association.

The badge consists of a radiant gold coloured Cross on a red field for men and a blue field for women with the words 'Catholic Action' suitably inscribed around the Cross.

It is then a duty to wear it, since it is so important. It is given at the investiture ceremony, with some

solemnity as explained in the ritual for the investiture ceremony (See Appendix).

2. *The Banner* is the collective symbol or sign as the badge is the individual or personal one.

It is a symbol advertising the Association and its programme. Every Association has its banner which is considered as sacred and must be held in honour.

The banner of Catholic Action displays, on one side, a replica of the badge and, on the other, the name of the Association and place embroidered or painted on suitable cloth in the form and size of the confraternity banners.

The banner is blessed and handed over with solemnity at a public ceremony. (See Appendix).

The banner is entrusted to a special member who must take great care of it and carry it with pride.

3. *The Enrolment Card* is the official token of membership in the Association. It is a certificate which testifies that the member has been enrolled in the Association and that he adheres to its programme. There is no proper association without such a certificate. The enrolment gives the right to the spiritual benefits bestowed by the Sovereign Pontiff on the Association of Catholic Action and the great favour of enjoying all the indulgences attached to it. (See Indulgence—Appendix).

The enrolment card implies the privilege of taking part in all the manifestations of Catholic Action, of addressing the meeting and of voting when necessity arises.

It places the small obligation on the member of paying his monthly or annual membership subscription. The association must live and it is the duty of the members to support and maintain their association; hence all should most willingly and generously subscribe regularly every month or every year, the small amount which is asked from them. It is a means of education and discipline. The little sacrifice is amply repaid by all the spiritual, moral and even material advantages enjoyed by the associates as members of a world-wide Association.

The enrolment card consists of a piece of white or coloured card-board. The following information in print and handwriting are recorded:

CATHOLIC ACTION

This is to certify that

N.N. .... has been enrolled as a member of the Catholic Action Association in the N.N. .... Parish, at .... on the ....

Place.......................

Date.........................

N.N. .... N.N. ....

Secretary President

The enrolment card must be given at the investiture ceremony with some solemnity and with a few words of explanation by the Ecclesiastical Assistant or the priest performing the ceremony.

II. THE PATRON SAINTS AND THE PRINCIPAL FEAST OF CATHOLIC ACTION

The Patron Saint of Catholic Action given by Pope Pius XI to the Association is in general St. Francis of Assisi.

In India, at the Marian Congress in 1921, it was proposed that Our Lady, St. Francis Xavier and St. Theresa of Lisieux be the Patrons of the Association.

Other local patrons may be chosen with the approval of the Ordinary.

The Principal Feast of Catholic Action is the Feast of Christ the King, as the aim of Catholic Action is to bring all men under the sweet Reign of Christ and to restore all things in Christ our Shepherd and King.

CONCLUSION

In his booklet 'Introduction to Catholic Action', Rev. Fr. W. Ferree, S.M., speaking on the importance of Catholic Action remarks "that the official and unofficial statements of Pope Pius XI on Catholic Action for only the first ten years of his reign fill a closely printed volume of about six hundred pages and certainly his statements during the last part of his reign were almost as numerous. His first Encyclical letter "*Ubi Arcano*" was a general call to Catholic Action, and the last letter of his life, published on the very eve of his death, was an insistent exhortation to the Hierarchy of the Philippines to strengthen their organization of Catholic Action.

"We might notice that such unremitting and intense insistence on a single idea by the Papacy is something

which is without parallel in the history of the Church. The closest approach to it is to be found in the preaching of the Crusades, but even that hardly exhibited such an intense singleness of purpose. Catholic Action certainly must have been something very important in the eyes of Pius XI to have led him to such unprecedented insistence; and his successor Pope Pius XII is continuing that insistence despite his immense preoccupation with the present world crisis".

For Pius XI Catholic Action was a gift of God for the renovation and salvation of the world. "Catholic Action", said the Holy Pontiff, writing to Cardinal Bertram,

> "is in truth an appropriate means by which the Church may confer on nations all kinds of benefits; a providential gift of God whereby the Church may win over to Catholic belief and practice, those who, for want of any contact or relations with priests, would easily succumb to the fallacies and evil artifices of seditious men...... .Evidently, Catholic Action merits every consideration and support, not only from Bishops and Priests who know that it is like the apple of Our eye, but also from the heads and officials of all states.
>
> "If it enjoys this general appeal, it will bear to Catholic people a great abundance of fruits, awaken everywhere in souls religious sentiments and greatly contribute to civil welfare."

Indeed! What a blessing for the Church and society, this movement would be, if realised in its entirety! Pius XI considered it as an inspiration from God and the beginning of a new era in the history of the Church.

Shall we see its realization ? The answer depends from our effort and perseverence but especially from our conviction of the tremendous potentialities we have in this providential movement. See how our adversaries realize these potentialities of ours and how they envy us, our organisation and power.

Jaures, the great French Socialist, assassinated in 1914, a few days before the beginning of the First World War, once annoyed at the Parliament by the Catholic deputies who were interrupting him, retorted : " Shut up, you Catholics, for, if we Socialists had at our disposal your Churches, your pulpits and your obligatory meetings of Sunday, we would have been long ago the masters of the world ".

What a crushing statement ! Does it imply that the means we have at our disposal are such that in other hands they would give better results ? It must put us to shame ! And Jaures did not mention the still greater powers we have at our disposal : the Holy Eucharist, the Sacraments, etc.

Was it not Clemenceau, another French atheist, surnamed ' the Tiger ' who said : " When Christians will live their christianity, then the greatest revolution will take place ".

Is it possible that non-christians, atheists, enemies of God and the Church realise better and more than we Catholics, children of God and of the Church, the power and strength of our Faith and of our organisation ? What would they say of the powerful means of Catholic Action and what would they do if they could have at their disposal such an organisation ?

Let us then listen to the Pope of Catholic Action who, stressing the aim of this movement, appeals to all men of good will

> "to raise up a cohort of good citizens, men and women, but particularly the youth of both sexes, who have nothing nearer at heart and desire nothing more earnestly than in some way to participate in the sacred ministry of the Church, and so with her as guide and teacher, to press forward courageously towards their goal: the promotion, both privately and publicly, of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ."

Let us answer this appeal most promptly and generously. Without fear, with buoyant hope and joy in our hearts, let us all, united as one body, take our place under the banner of Christ and throw all our energies and all the resources of our soul and body into the task of overthrowing the kingdom of Satan and of extending the Empire of Our Eternal King. God wills it. His Vicar commands it:

> "Cease not to labour in this spirit of unity for the welfare of our Holy Religion. .... By uniting ever more closely the forces at your command, you will impart to the Christian life in your country a greater and ever greater vigour in the spirit of justice and charity, to the end that the reign among you of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, may be supreme and may abound in every blessing. The Peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ."

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

DRAFTS OF STATUTES FOR THE DIOCESAN COUNCILS AND PAROCHIAL BOARDS OF CATHOLIC ACTION AND STUDY CIRCLES[1]

These drafts are meant only to be guides or models.

In giving them, we do not intend to impose them in any way. They are mere drafts to be adopted, if judged useful, and also to be adapted according to the various needs and circumstances of the Dioceses or the parishes.

The term 'Council' for instance, can be changed into Centre, Board, Committee or Conference as it might seem preferable.

A

STATUTES FOR THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL OF CATHOLIC ACTION

1. *Creation of the Council.*

The Diocesan Council (Board) of Catholic Action of the Diocese of N.N. is hereby consittuted under the protection of Christ the King, Our Lady Help of Christians,[2] St. Francis Xavier, St. Theresa of Lisieux, and Saint N.N.[3] The Centre of the Diocesan Council is situated at......[4]

---

[1] Several repetitions will be found in these drafts, but they are inevitable as we wish to make the drafts of Statutes as complete as possible and save the reader the trouble of making him refer to previous pages.

[2] Another title can be chosen.

[3] The Patron of the Diocese.

[4] State place with full address.

2. *Its nature and end.*

The Diocesan Council of Catholic Action is the Centre of all the Catholic Action activities in the Diocese. All the Directions for Catholic Action within the Diocese proceed from this Centre which is under the immediate control of the Ordinary and in harmony with the general directives given by the National (Central) Committee of Catholic Action.

3. *Its Objects.*

The objects of the Diocesan Council are :

(1) to coordinate, direct, promote and develop Catholic Action within the Diocese through the Parochial Boards with which it maintains close and regular relations, always respecting the characteristics of each aggregate movement ;

(2) to promote the erection of Parochial Boards of Catholic Action in the parishes of the Diocese where they have not yet been established and to assist them in their work ;

(3) to infuse the Catholic Action spirit of Apostolate among all the religious associations and to coordinate their activities within the limit and aim of Catholic Action, always respecting their own Statutes ;

(4) to study the means for a more intense Catholic life in the Diocese and the role which can be played by Catholic Action to intensify it ;

(5) to carry on faithfully and effectively all the directions and initiatives coming from the Central Committee of Catholic Action ;

(6) to promote Missionary Action as per means suggested below ;

(7) to promote Catholic Social Action as per directions given by the Committee of Social Action ;

(8) to convoke once a year, all the office-bearers of the various Parochial Boards in the Diocese :

(a) to present the annual report for approval;

(b) to study ways and means to strengthen the movement ;

(c) to examine the work done ; and

(d) to fix a uniform programme of work for the following year.

(9) to prepare, convoke and direct all the general religious manifestations in which the whole Diocese or several parishes will take part.

4. *Means to attain these objects.*

The objects of the Diocesan Council are attained :

(1) by propagating the idea and spirit of Catholic Action, of Missionary Action and of Catholic Social Action among the members and the public through public lectures and the publication of books and pamphlets ;

(2) by organizing lectures and conferences for the training of the members of Catholic Action ;

(3) by establishing and developing study circles where leaders can learn through a systematic course all the technique of Missionary Action, and social science ;

(4) by encouraging and supporting such organizations which are engaged in Catholic Action, Missionary activities and in social works ;

(5) by helping the Ordinary of the Diocese in the establishment and development of :

(a) the Apostleship of Prayer ;

(b) the Society of the Holy Childhood ;

(c) the Society of St. Peter for the Indigenous Clergy ;

(d) the Students' Missionary League ;

(e) all other works which aim at propagating our Faith.

(6) by promoting and sustaining works or associations for the maintenance of :

(a) Missionaries, Seminarists and Catechists;

(b) Mission schools, orphanages or any other charitable Institutions.

(7) by fostering the missionary spirit through :

(a) Mission Sunday Celebrations ;

(b) Missionary Exhibitions ;

(c) Mission fete ;

(d) Conferences on Missions ;

(e) Organised trips to mission centres ;

(f) collecting articles for the missions;

(g) circulating missionary magazines.

(8) by organizing Catholic Action Conferences or Rallies and Catholic Social Congresses;

(9) by establishing especially in High Schools and Colleges branches of Catholic Action for the purpose of arousing in the students a keen interest in Catholic Action, Missionary Action and Catholic Social Organization and reconstruction;

(10) by preparing and introducing in the High Schools and Colleges, with the collaboration of the Principals and Staff, a syllabus and a programme of Catholic Action as well as of Missionary Action;

(11) by employing any other means conducive to spreading and strengthening Catholic Action and Missionary Action in the Diocese.

5. *Its Members.*

The Diocesan Council of Catholic Action consists of the following members:

(1) one Ecclesiastical Assistant appointed by the Ordinary;

(2) the Presidents of each of the Parochial Boards of Catholic Action of the Episcopal City Parishes and two or more Presidents selected and nominated by the Ordinary from among

all the Presidents of the Parochial Boards of the other centres.

(3) such number of other members selected and nominated by the Ordinary from among the members of the various Parochial Boards so as to ensure that the members of the Diocesan Council represent all and each of the various aggregate associations.

(4) Such influential persons (men or women), selected and nominated by the Ordinary, who being animated by the Spirit of Catholic Action and who owing to their competence and position might be of help to the Council.

6. *Office-bearers.*

The office-bearers form the Diocesan Executive Council of Catholic Action which is composed of the following members:

(1) The Ecclesiastical Assistant;

(2) A President;

(3) A Secretary;

(4) A Treasurer;

(5) Four Councillors.

Except the Ecclesiastical Assistant who is appointed by the Ordinary and who cannot be elected to any other office, all the other office-bearers are elected by the members of the Council (including the Ecclesiastical Assistant) from among the members of the Diocesan Council.

7. *The Ecclesiastical Assistant.*

(1) The Ecclesiastical Assistant in the Diocesan Council shall have the help of a co-assistant whenever necessary.

(2) In case they are two, their functions shall be as follows :

(a) One of them will be in direct contact with the Ecclesiastical Assistants of the various organizations of Catholic Action within the Parishes of the Diocese, always with the previous consent of the respective Parish Priest ;

(b) the other will be in contact with all the organizations of Catholic Action in the schools, colleges and convents and any other specialized group, always with a previous understanding with the superior of the Institution and in consultation with the respective Ecclesiastical Assistants.

(3) The general duties of the Ecclesiastical Assistants are :

(a) to form and guide the members of the Association ;

(b) to see that the activities of the Diocesan Council and that of Catholic Action groups, within the Diocese, be always in conformity with the spirit of the Church and the directions of the Ordi-

nary and of the Central Committee of Catholic Action;

(c) to convoke periodically all the Ecclesiastical Assistants of the various Parochial Boards or groups within the Diocese, to study and solve the problems which may arise during the exercise of their functions and to coordinate their activities in the Diocese;

(d) to take part in all the meetings, guide and inspire them in the true spirit of Catholic Action as its vivifying force;

(e) although they do not vote in the deliberations (their vote being only consultative) they have the right of veto so as to protect the Association and make sure that the spirit of Catholic Action will not suffer in any way.

8. *The President.*

The President (always in consultation with the Ecclesiastical Assistants):

(1) directs and represents the Association;

(2) calls together and presides over the meetings of the Diocesan Council;

(3) prepares with the Secretary the agenda of the meetings;

(4) signs the minutes of the meetings as well as the correspondence and other papers;

(5) chooses and appoints officially, whenever necessary, the Speakers* for the various meetings;

(6) sends to the various Presidents of the Parochial Boards the necessary instructions and directions for the development of Catholic Action in the Diocese;

(7) prepares with the Secretary the annual report to be submitted to the Ordinary and to the National Director of the Committee of Catholic Action;

(8) prepares with the assistance of the Ecclesiastical Assistants and the Secretary the programme of action for the year and sends through the Secretary a copy to all the Presidents of the Parochial Boards;

(9) prepares with the Treasurer the budget for the year;

(10) watches over the activities of the members and sees that the object of Catholic Action be carried on and the means to attain them be made use of scrupulously.

---

*Catholics whose life and conduct is known to be at variance with their faith shall not be asked nor given permission to speak at meetings held under Catholic Action auspices. Non-Catholics whose character is irreprochable according to Catholic principles may be welcome as speakers. Such cases may arise in meetings where the topic concerns social problems. At meetings held under the auspices of other societies, all the members of Catholic Action Associations must obtain permission from the President of the Diocesan Council of Parish Board before accepting to speak officially in the name of the Catholic Action Association.

N.B.—Whenever a Vice-President will be necessary he will be elected by the members of the Diocesan Council from among the four councillors. He will substitute the President in the latter's absence. Meanwhile the Senior Councillor may act, in case of necessity, as President.

9. *The Secretary.*

His office will be:

(1) to remind the members of the Diocesan Executive Council of the date of the meetings and to call them in case of emergency meetings;

(2) to maintain a register containing the minutes of each meeting, and to have the minutes duly signed by the President at the next meeting;

(3) to keep an up-to-date record of all the Parochial Boards with the names and addresses of their actual office-bearers;

(4) to attend to all correspondence and maintain an archive with all the files containing the official correspondence and copies of answers, as well as the circulars received from the centre;

(5) to preserve all literature on Catholic Action and Missionary Action, issued by the Central Committee;

(6) to keep a library consisting of authorized books, encyclicals, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, and other literature on Catholic Action and Missionary Action which might

be useful for reference, lectures, conferences, etc.;

(7) to prepare with the President the annual general report to be presented to the Ordinary and to the National Director of the Committee of Catholic Action;

(8) to prepare the history of the movement in the Diocese and to keep it up-to-date;

(9) to prepare with the Ecclesiastical Assistants and the President the programme of work for the year and to send a copy of it to the Presidents of the Parochial Boards;

(10) to send now and then short reports of the work to the Catholic weekly papers.

10. *The Treasurer.*

His office will be:

(1) to keep all accounts and submit them at every monthly meeting of the Executive Council;

(2) to deposit all the moneys in the Bank in the joint names of the President and the Treasurer;

(3) to disburse funds as instructed by the Executive Council and pay bills approved by the President;

(4) to submit to the Ordinary an annual financial report signed by the President and himself;

(5) to prepare with the President the budget for the year.

11. *The Councillors.*

They take part in all the meetings and assist the President in his work and share his responsibility. The decisions, in case of disagreement, are taken by secret ballot and a majority of votes.

In case of necessity, the Councillors may be entrusted with a particular office, as:

(1) to supply information on articles of the secular press;

(2) to correct mis-statements and protest with dignity against anti-Catholic bias;

(3) to protest against objectionable pictures and plays, etc.

12. *Terms of Office.*

The terms of service for the office-bearers shall be one year, with privilege of renewal.

13. *Meetings.*

(1) The meetings are of four kinds:

(a) meeting of the Executive Council;

(b) meeting of all the members of the Diocesan Council;

(c) meeting of the office-bearers of all the Parochial Boards;

(d) general meeting of the various associations for combined action.

(2) The Executive Council shall meet regularly on the second Thursday of each month. When business shall warrant it, it will meet also on the last Thursday of the month, especially if departmental committees have been formed and they need special directions;

(3) The Diocesan Council with all its members shall meet every six months at the call of the President;

(4) The meeting of the office-bearers of all the Parochial Boards shall come off regularly once a year in the city and other centres at the call of the Diocesan President;

(5) The general meeting shall take place whenever a general manifestation is called by the Ordinary or the Diocesan President, for a special purpose or a particular feast;

(6) The meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the special rules and instructions issued by the Ordinary.

14. *Time and place of the Meetings.*

(1) The meetings of the Executive Council shall last one hour; the other meetings must not last more than an hour and a half, except general meetings which can last longer.

(2) The place of the meeting, as well as the preparation for it, shall be as per instructions given by the Ordinary.

15. *The Motto of the Association.*

Catholic Action has for its aim the advent of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of all men, hence its motto is: "Adveniat Regnum Tuum — A.R.T. — Thy Kingdom come."

16. *The Badge.*

This consists of a radiant gold coloured Cross on a red field for men and on a blue field for women with the words 'Catholic Action' suitably placed around the Cross. For the President the ribbon is red, for the Council members the ribbon is yellow.

17. *The Banner.*

In fabric, form and size it conforms to the type of the confraternity banners and bears embroidered or painted, on one side, the above emblem and, on the other side, the name of the Association and that of the Diocese.

18. *Funds.*

The funds required for the running of the Diocesan Council are provided from the contributions from the Parochial Boards, from free donations and other means approved at the meetings.

19. *The Organ.*

The official organ of the Association is the Review issued by the National Committee of Catholic Action or the Ordinary. The members are asked to subscribe to it and to find subscribers.

20. *The Statutes.*

These Statutes can be changed and amended, as circumstances require, by the Ordinary, the sole Judge in their interpretation. In case of any conflict or divergence of opinion, the matter will be referred to the Ordinary for final decision.

B

STATUTES FOR THE PAROCHIAL BOARDS OF CATHOLIC ACTION

1. *Erection.*

(1) The Parochial Board of Catholic Action of N.N. Parish in N.N. (put name of the Parish and place) is hereby erected and constituted under the protection of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Lady Help of Christians, St. Francis Xavier, St. Theresa of Lisieux and N.N. (put name of the patron of the parish.)

(2) The office of the Parochial Board of Catholic Action is situated at the Parish House at N.N. (state street and place): all correspondence relating to Catholic Action must be addressed to: The Secretary, Catholic Action, N.N. (full address as before).

2. *Aim and objects.*

The Parochial Board of Catholic Action is established in the Parish:

(1) to coordinate together all the following religious associations and groups which have

received the official mandate of organs of Catholic Action by the Ordinary, i.e.: (name here all the various existing religious associations in the parish which are linked together by the Parochial Board of Catholic Action.);

(2) to intensify the Christian life in its members and in the Parish, that is, to deepen, spread, and defend the Christian principles in the individual, the family and society in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church and the directives of the Holy See, the Central Committee and the Diocesan Council of Catholic Action;

(3) to promote Missionary Action;

(4) to promote the acceptance and the application of Catholic Action principles and ideals among non-members;

(5) to help in the establishment and development of new Catholic organizations in the parish and direct them towards Catholic Action and Missionary Action;

(6) to coordinate and sustain the various forms of associations, institutions or organizations existing in the parish, directing them towards Catholic Action and Missionary Action;

(7) to stimulate the apostolic spirit on the part of the laity and to inculcate upon them the spirit and duty of collaboration with the Hierarchy

for the spreading of the Kingdom of Christ in the Parish;

(8) to form Catholic opinion;

(9) to study the needs of Catholic life in the parish and to prepare the programme of action for the course of the year in accordance with the instructions received from the Centre or from the Diocesan Council;

(10) to promote and direct within the parish all religious manifestations of a general character;

(11) to protect and defend morality and foster the league of Decency;

(12) to take part in the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, imparting religious instruction particularly to Catholic children not attending Catholic schools;

(13) to promote the erection of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament which must be established in the Parish;

(14) to promote any spiritual work which helps the personal sanctification of the members;

(15) to promote and sustain all the social and charitable works established in the parish;

3. *Ways and means to attain these objects*:

(1) by disseminating Catholic literature;

(2) by promoting Missionary Action as per means suggested in the Statutes for the Diocesan Council;

(3) by conducting study circles, instruction classes and summer schools for the promotion of Catholic Action, Missionary Action and Social Science;

(4) by promoting closed retreats or missions for the members and others;

(5) by cooperating with other societies in realizing their aim and by promoting their membership;

(6) by arranging, with the parish priest's consent, for Holy Hours, for special services on particular occasions, for rallies and meetings;

(7) by employing any other means to help the members to realize the programme of Catholic Action and of Missionary Action.

4. *Members.*

The Parochial Board of Catholic Action is composed of:

(1) The Parish Priest, or one of his assistants appointed with the consent of the Ordinary, who will be the Ecclesiastical Assistant;

(2) the President or the Prefect or a representative of each of the various religious movements or associations existing in the parish and in the Institutions within the Parish, which have received the official mandate of the Ordinary as organs of Catholic Action;

(3) some influential persons (men or women) of the parish not coming under No. (2) selected

by the parish priest, who animated by the spirit of Catholic Action through their influence and position are of help to the Board.

5. *Office-bearers.*

The Office-bearers of the Parochial Board form the Executive Committee which consists of the following members:

(1) The Ecclesiastical Assistant;

(2) The President;

(3) A Secretary;

(4) A Treasurer;

(5) Four Councillors:

(a) Except the Ecclesiastical Assistant who is appointed by the Ordinary and who cannot be elected to any other office, all the other office-bearers are elected by the members of the Board (including the Ecclesiastical Assistant) from among the same members of the Board.

(b) The President should preferably be chosen from among the Presidents or Prefects of the aggregate associations and that by rotation.

(c) The secretary and the treasurer can be the same person if the Board wishes it.

6. *The Ecclesiastical Assistant:*

(1) attends to the spiritual formation and instruction of the members in all the matters con-

cerning Catholic Action and Missionray Action;

(2) assists the President and sees to it that the activities of the Executive Committee and those of the members of the Board be always in conformity with the spirit of the Church and the directions of the higher authorities of the Association;

(3) takes part in all the meetings, guides and inspires them in the true apostolic spirit of Catholic Action and Missionary Action;

(4) has only a consultative vote, but has the right of veto so as to protect the real spirit of the Association.

7. *The President* (always in consultation and harmony with the Ecclesiastical Assistant):

(1) directs and represents officially the Association, and with his Board organises the Association in the Parish;

(2) calls and presides over the meetings of the Association;

(3) prepares with the Secretary the agenda of the meetings;

(4) signs the minutes of the meetings as well as the correspondence and other papers;

(5) chooses and appoints officially the speakers;

(6) sponsors the retreat movement and all the religious services which foster the spiritual life in the members;

(7) prepares with the Secretary the annual general report to be submitted to the Diocesan Council;

(8) prepares with the assistance of the Ecclesiastical Assistant and the Secretary, the programme of action for the year;

(9) prepares with the Treasurer, the budget for the year, and signs all statements of accounts;

(10) watches over the activities of all the members and sees that the aim of Catholic Action is obtained through all the means at their disposal;

(11) signs the enrolment cards prepared by the Secretary;

(12) convenes whenever necessary, with his Executive Committee, the presidents, prefects or heads of the aggregate religious associations existing in the parish, to study with them and concert such ways and means as are apt to coordinate their activities and to realize in perfect unity the programme of Catholic Action and of Missionary Action;

(13) fixes, with the same officials of other associations and his Executive Committee the programme for the general services or religious manifestations in which all will take part in common;

(14) represents the Parochial Board at the Diocesan Council meetings and speaks or acts for it.

In case of absence, he may appoint any member of his Executive Committee to take his place at the Diocesan Council meetings when he should be present.

8. *The Secretary and Treasurer.*

The same person can be Secretary and Treasurer:

A. As Secretary:

(1) he interests himself in the general progress of the Association;

(2) he sends out the notices, and reminds at the proper time, the office-bearers, and the members, of the respective forthcoming meetings;

(3) enrols the members and keeps up-to-date the register with their names and their full address;

(4) takes the attendance at the various meetings;

(5) prepares the enrolment cards for the signature of the President and distributes them to the members;

(6) maintains two registers: one for the Executive Committee meetings and the other for the Board meetings where all the minutes of the respective meetings are entered and duly signed by the President;

(7) attends to all the correspondence and keeps an archive with separate files for all the official correspondence, circulars and acts sent by or received at the office;

(8) preserves all literature regarding Catholic Action and Missionary Action, and keeps up a circulating library containing authorized books, encyclicals, pamphlets, magazines and newspapers, etc.;

(9) prepares with the President the annual general report to be sent to the Diocesan Council;

(10) prepares the history of the Association in the Parish and keeps the Chronicle up-to-date;

(11) prepares with the Ecclesiastical Assistant and the President the programme of the work for the year;

(12) sends occasionally short articles and reports of the work to the weekly papers, as well as to the various organs of the Association;

(13) subscribes and makes the members subscribe to the various organs of the Association, be they Central or National, Diocesan or Inter-Diocesan.

B. As Treasurer:

(1) he receives the fees or the contribution from the members;

(2) takes and keeps all the accounts and submits them once a month at the meeting of the Executive Council;

(3) keeps all the moneys in the Bank in the joint names of the President and the Treasurer;

(4) submits to the Executive Committee the annual financial report signed by him and the Presi-

dent. Such accounts are presented also at the annual general meeting of all the members;

(5) prepares with the President the budget of the year;

(6) disburses the funds as instructed by the Executive Committee and pays the bills approved by the President.

9. *The Councillors.*

They take part in all the meetings, assist the President in his work and share his responsibility. In case of disagreement, decisions are taken by secret ballot and a majority of votes.

The Councillors may be entrusted with departmental wroks or committees, for the Press, Cinema, Education, and other needs.

10. *Term of Office.*

All the office-bearers are appointed or elected for one year, with the privilege of renewal.

11. *Meetings.*

(1) There are four kinds of meetings:

(a) meetings of the Executive Committee;

(b) meetings of all the members of the Parochial Board;

(c) meetings of all or several Parochial Boards of the Diocese;

(d) general meetings.

(2) The Executive Committee shall meet regularly on the second Monday of each month. When business warrants it, it shall meet also on the last Monday of the month, especially when departmental committees are formed and need special directions;

(3) The members of the Parochial Board shall meet once a month, on the second Wednesday of the month;

(4) The meetings of all the Parochial Boards of Catholic Action shall meet once a year at the call of the President of the Diocesan Council when and where advisable;

(5) The general meetings shall take place whenever a general manifestation is called by the Ordinary or the President of the Diocesan Council.

12. *Time limit for the meetings.*

The meetings of the Executive Committee shall not last more than an hour; the other meetings must not last more than an hour and a half. The general meeting, however, can last longer.

13. *Enrolment cards and fees:*

(1) Each individual, on his becoming a member of the Association, after the official mandate of the Ordinary and the consequent coordination of the various groups, receives at the

investiture, the enrolment card signed by the President.

(2) The membership fee to be paid faithfully by all the members is a quarter anna per month or annas three per year. This gives the right to wear the insignia of the Association.

14. *The Motto of the Association.*

Catholic Action has for its aim the advent of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of all men, hence its motto is: Adveniat Regnum Tuum — A.R.T. — Thy Kingdom come."

15. *The Pledge.*

It is the formal consecration of the member to Catholic Action. It must be taken by all members at all the meetings and should often be repeated by individual members in front of the altar. It is given further on.

16. *The Badge.*

This consists of a radiant gold coloured Cross on a red field for men and on a blue field for women with the words 'Catholic Action' suitably placed around the Cross.

17. *The Banner.*

It conforms to the type of the Confraternity banners and bears embroidered or painted on one side, the above emblem, and on the other, the name of the Association and that of the parish.

18. *Funds.*

The funds for the running of the Parochial Board are provided by the membership fees, free donations and other means approved at the meetings.

19. *The Organs.*

The official organs of the Association are the Review issued by the Central Committee of Catholic Action and that published by the Ordinary if any. The members are expected to subscribe to them and to find subscribers.

20. *The Statutes.*

These statutes can be changed and amended as circumstances require, by the Ordinary who is the sole Judge in their interpretation. In case of conflict or divergence of opinion, the matter shall be referred first to the Diocesan Council, then to the Ordinary, if necessary.

C

STATUTES FOR STUDY CIRCLES

1. *Aim.*

The aim of the Study Circle is to enable its members to complete their own religious, moral, intellectual, social and technical training so as to become thorough Catholics in their private and public life and apostles, able to radiate Christ in their environment and to influence it. The Study Circle aims also at forming leaders.

Leaders are few to be found and hence the need of seeking them diligently and of selecting them prudently before training them.

2. *Members.*

The 'Study Circle' is a small group of members from two or three to a maximum of twelve in number taken from among young or grown-up people. All should be of the same approximate age, sex and preferably of the same profession, social position and aspirations (Seminarists, High School boys or girls, University or College young men or women, doctors, lawyers, teachers, merchants, farmers, mill-workers, office clerks, male or female, nurses and others). They should be guided by an Ecclesiastical Assistant who in his turn, can be helped by religious assistants, especially when the circles have multiplied. Circles, in fact, may multiply, but each unit must retain its characteristic of a group of a few homogenous members.

3. *Admission of members.*

Endeavour should be made to have a group of twelve members. Now and then, with the consent of the Leader, a member may bring to the circle a non-member, who is desirous of seeing how a meeting works. If the members increase beyond twelve, another cell may be formed under the guidance of an experienced leader. People merely in search of novelty and amusement should not be admitted, for thus the circle would lose its seriousness and efficacy.

4. *Subscription.*

A membership fee of a fixed amount per month or per year is contributed by the members. Should they desire to buy books or anything else useful or necessary to the circle, the members may take up a subscription among themselves for this purpose.

5. *Meetings.*

(a) *Weekly*: Meetings should be held regularly every week; monthly meetings are of very little profit. Only those months should be chosen when it is certain that all the members can attend regularly. As a weekly meeting held week after week without a break over the course of a whole year is liable to become very tiresome and heavy, it is preferable to divide the year into two or three terms, each of ten or twelve meetings. Ten or twelve meetings per term held regularly will produce better effects than meetings held weekly, uninterruptedly, thoughout the whole year.

(b) *Length*: Meetings should last not more than an hour and a half and not less than an hour. In exceptional cases, however, the members may unanimously agree to continue to sit beyond an hour and a half. It would be preferable to close the meeting at the stated time and then take up the discussion informally, thus leaving the members free to retire or to stay. Long drawn-out meetings are fatal to Study Circles.

(c) *Time*: The time suitable to all should be chosen; and once fixed, regularity and punctuality must be insisted upon. Irregularity and unpunctuality are also fatal to Study Circles.

(d) *Place*: The best place must be chosen where the members may feel at their ease and free to express their ideas. The Ecclesiastical Assistant will see to that with the leader.

6. *Subject for Discussion.*

Though a fresh subject may be taken up at every meeting, it would probably prove more satisfactory if only one or two subjects were taken up and discussed fully over a whole term. Any subject that conforms to the aim and object of the Study Circles and is adapted to the intellectual capacity of the members, is a fit subject for discussion.

The subject should be neither too difficult nor too vast. Nor must it be studied superficially. Should a book or an encyclical be taken up for study, each member should have a copy. The topic should be divided and sub-divided and then the plan followed scrupulously. Much depends, in fact everything depends, on the choice of the subjects and the interest taken in it by the members.

When a theme has been chosen, effort should be made to find literature dealing with it and the first meeting will consist in reading extracts from different publications in an endeavour to give a kind of bird's-eye view. A syllabus is drawn up to cover a stated number of meetings and different portions are assigned to different members: some are given the presentation of a point, others are to search out difficulties and objections arising out of those points. It is recommended that the members should write out what they wish to

say, and that during the discussions they should take notes of objections raised and replies given, for such notes will be of use later on.

At the end of the meeting a brief summary of the evening's work is made to be incorporated by the Secretary in the Minutes.

7. *Agenda.*

The meetings should conform to the following order:

(1) Opening prayer, said for a special intention specified each time by the Ecclesiastical Assistant ;

(2) Roll Call ;

(3) Reading of the minutes of the previous meeting in which is incorporated a brief summary of the previous week's discussions ;

(4) Business arising from the minutes (3 to 5 minutes) ;

(5) Report of work done by the members in accordance with the resolutions passed at the last meeting. Some members may read, if they so prefer, the report of their activities and services. (This must not exceed 15 minutes) ;

(6) Religious formation :

(a) Reading and discussion on the Gospel ;

(b) Liturgical explanations.

(This item takes between 15 to 20 minutes.)

(7) Reading and development of the chosen theme:

(a) Discussion by the members (care must be taken that every member takes an active part in the discussion).

(b) Enquiry method to be followed in the discussion:

(i) Observe (the problem to face).

(ii) Judge (the attitude to be taken).

(iii) Act (the solution which must follow).

(8) Assignment of the topic for the next meeting;

(9) Appointment of proponents for the following meeting; certain members are detailed to work up points for discussions, pro and con.

(10) Special remarks and special announcements made by the Leader;

(11) The time and place of the meeting if those are not fixed once for all;

(12) The closing prayer.

N.B.—A break can be had in the middle of the meeting. All the various items should be so divided that the meeting should not last more than an hour and a half. Difficulties will be found at the very beginning. Experience after a while will put everything right.

8. *Office-bearers.*

To form a circle at the start we need:

(1) an Ecclesiastical Assistant;

(2) A Leader to be formed.

When the circle grows and the members are between five and twelve (the maximum number), then we suggest the appointment of the following office-bearers for the smooth running of the Study Circle:

(1) an Ecclesiastical Assistant;

(2) a Leader;

(3) a Secretary;

(4) a Treasurer; and

(5) a Librarian.

9. *Functions of the Office-bearers.*

(1) *The Ecclesiastical Assistant*:

(a) represents the Hierarchy and sees that the directives of the Ordinary are carried out faithfully;

(b) trains the members but especially the leaders by his example, spirit, instructions and spiritual direction;

(c) assists, guides and controls the members and the meetings but leaves the direction to the Leader whom he meets and instructs separately before each meeting;

(d) guides the discussions along the right line, clears up doubts and difficulties and interrupts or corrects but only when necessary;

(e) encourages always and infuses confidence and enthusiasm in the members.

(2) *The Leader*:

(a) directs and leads the group;

(b) prepares himself before the meetings studying well the subjects and discussing them previously with the Ecclesiastical Assistant;

(c) with tact and humility presides at the meetings and directs them under the guidance of the Ecclesiastical Assistant;

(d) helps and guides in the choosing of subjects for religious formation and for general topics to be discussed at the meetings;

(e) looks up for material that might be useful to the development of the various topics;

(f) prepares, with details, the plan of discussion in order to keep the debate, lively and interesting;

(g) looks ahead, in order to foresee difficulties and doubts and be able to solve them at the meetings. Should any objection raised at the meetings be beyond his capacity, he should, in all humility, confess his inability to answer immediately, and if the Ecclesiastical Assistant is absent, he should propose that the final word be left over to the next meeting seeking in the meantime to get the solution from the Ecclesiastical Assistant or another competent person;

(h) assigns with prudence the subject for the following week's discussion and allocates the points to the different speakers;

(i) leads but does not dominate; he seeks to make all the members, especially the more timid,

take part in the discussions which he does not monopolise for himself as if he were the speaker instead of being the leader;

(j) watches that the meeting does not turn into a conference or a lecture but keeps the homely atmosphere and sees that all the members take a personal and lively interest in it; he, however, takes care that the discussion keeps to the point and does not wander;

(k) gives when the discussion is over, a summary of it; he presents the various remarks and makes the official announcements;

(l) sees that the meeting does not go beyond an hour and a half;

(m) brings his group into contact with other groups for interchange of ideas.

(3) *The Secretary*:

(a) keeps the membership roll and marks the attendance of the members at the meetings;

(b) writes down and keeps the minutes of the meeting, incorporating in them a brief summary of the topic discussed; such synopsis to be prepared preferably by the proponent himself;

(c) keeps up-to-date the chronicle where all the events relating to the cell are written down;

(d) presents annually a general report of the work of the circle.

(4) *The Treasurer* :

(a) collects the membership fees and funds for the purchase of books or other materials useful to the circle ;

(b) renders to the group every six months, a financial statement of accounts.

N.B.—The Secretary can also be the Treasurer.

(5) *The Librarian* :

This office-bearer is appointed only when the circle has grown into a full group and has already worked for some time and there is a sufficient material collected to justify the nomination of a librarian. The librarian, when appointed :

(a) collects all the books, encyclicals, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers and other literature, which may be of interest to the group ;

(b) lends out to members, books, pamphlets, etc., keeping a note of what he has lent out as well as the name of the borrowers ;

(c) helps the leader in finding the literature which will help in preparing and developing the various subjects under discussion.

10. *Nomination of Office-bearers.*

(1) The Ecclesiastical Assistant is nominated by the Ordinary ;

(2) The Leader is selected by the Ecclesiastical Assistant ;

(3) The Secretary, the Treasurer and the Librarian are elected by the members from among themselves.

APPENDIX II

RITUAL TO FOLLOW AT THE MEETINGS

A. THE PRAYERS

The prayers are divided into three parts. At the beginning of the meeting, in the middle and at the closing of it, the following prayers are recited by all, directed by the Ecclesiastical Assistant. In his absence the President reads them.

1. *At the beginning of the meeting*:

Opening Prayers: (They are said kneeling).

All : + In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost — Amen.

Ecclesiastical Assistant: Come, Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.

Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created.

All : And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

E.A.: Let us pray:

All : Oh, God Who by the light of the Holy Ghost, dost instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that in the same spirit, we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His Consolations, through Christ Our Lord — Amen.

Our Father Who art in Heaven........etc.

Hail Mary full of grace................etc.

E.A. : Most Sacred Heart of Jesus !

All : Have mercy on us.

E.A. : Immaculate Heart of Mary !

All : Pray for us.

E.A. : St. Francis Xavier !

All : Pray for us.

E.A. : St. Theresa of the Child Jesus !

All : Pray for us.

E.A. : Saint (Titular of the Diocese or Parish).

All : Pray for us.

+ In the name of the Father and of the Son........etc.

2. *In the middle of the meeting* :

After the attendance has been taken and the names placed at the foot of the Statue of the Sacred Heart, when the short interval is over and the meeting starts again, all stand. The Ecclesiastical Assistant (or in his absence the President) and all the members then alternatively say :

The Divine Praises.

Ecclesiastical Assistant : Let us bless the Lord.

All : Thanks be to God and glory to Him in the highest.

E.A. : Blessed be God.

All : Blessed be His Holy Name.

E.A. : Blessed be Jesus Christ true God and true Man.

All : Blessed be the Name of Jesus.

E.A. : Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart.

All : Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

E.A. : Blessed be the Great Mother of God Mary Most Holy.

All : Blessed be Her Holy and Immaculate Conception.

E.A. : Blessed be the Name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.

All : Blessed be St. Joseph her most chaste spouse.

E.A. : Blessed be God in His Angels and in His saints.

Let us pray :

All : We pray, O Lord, that we who now glory to battle under the standard of Christ the King, may be able to abide for ever with Him in the heavenly abode. Who livest and reignest in the unity of the Holy Ghost, God world without end — Amen.

3. *At the end of the meeting* :

After taking the Pledge as given below, all kneel down and recite :

The Closing prayers :

Ecclesiastical Assistant : Let us pray.

All : We give Thee thanks, Almighty God, for all Thy benefits, Who livest and reignest world without end — Amen.

E.A. : St. Francis of Assisi, Patron of Catholic Action!

All : Pray for us.

E.A. : Saint N.N. Patron of our Diocese!

All : Pray for us.

E.A. : Saint N.N. Patron of our Parish!

All : Pray for us.

E.A. : May Our Sweet Lord Jesus Christ give us a heart to love Him, a will to choose Him, an understanding to conceive Him, a reason which may always adhere to Him, and may the God of love and mercy love us enternally.*

The Lord + bless us and keep us from all evil and bring us unto life everlasting, and may the souls of our departed brethren and the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

All : + In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost — Amen.

---

*Here the Ecclesiastical Assistant blesses the members.

B. THE PLEDGE

The Pledge of Catholic Action is not a pure promise but it is a declaration to serve in the ranks of the Catholic Action. It is recited by all, always standing, at the end of all Catholic Action meetings. The President gives the lead and all recite with him :

"Deeply conscious of being not only members of the Church by Baptism but also Her champions by Confirmation, we fully adhere to the Statutes of Catholic Action and declare our determined intention to cooperate earnestly in the realization of its programme. We now do pledge, our Pope, our Bishop, and our Priests : loyalty, obedience, and our best efforts, in the profession, the practice, the propagation and the defence of the Catholic Religion and hail Christ Our Shepherd and Our King.

Christus vincit ! Christus regnat ! ! Christus imperat ! ! ! — Amen.

N.B.—When the pledge is recited by a single member, the plural is turned into singular.

APPENDIX III

INVESTITURE*

Preliminaries :

The co-ordination of all the existing religious associations within the Diocese to the Catholic Action Association, after the official mandate given by the Ordinary, makes ipso facto, all the members of these various aggregate associations, members of the Catholic Action Association of the Diocese. The reception of these members in the official Catholic Action Association of the Diocese must be done with some solemnity as it is done for the reception of members of Sodalities or other religious organizations.

The day for their reception is fixed by the Ecclesiastical Assistant in consultation with the Parish Priest and the authorities of the various aggregate associations.

The ceremony is performed by the Parish Priest or his substitute. The Ecclesiastical Assistant presents the candidates. If the Parish Priest happens to be the Ecclesiastical Assistant, either the Assistant Parish Priest or the Secretary of the Association presents the candidates, and the Parish Priest receives them in his capacity of Parish Priest, not in that of Ecclesiastical Assistant.

Order of the Ceremony :

(1) The hymn : " We Stand for God ".

---

*We have followed, with the necessary adaptations, the pattern for the solemn admission of members into the Sodality of the B. V. Mary. This can be modified according to circumstances.

(2) A short exhortation by the Parish Priest.

(3) The Ecclesiastical Assistant or the Secretary calls each of the candidates by the name saying: *Let them who desire to be admitted into the Association of Catholic Action draw near* N.N.......... N.N..........

The candidates who are placed in the Sanctuary approach the altar where the Parish Priest is sitting having on his right the President and the Vice-President or Secretary on his left.

The Ecclesiastical Assistant or the Secretary addresses the Parish Priest in the following terms:—

E.A.: Reverend Father, these present here desire to be enrolled in the Association of Catholic Action and ask of you to be admitted into it.

Parish Priest: It gives me great delight to perceive this your desire and I bless it most heartily. But before enrolling you in this great army I wish you to answer with a clear and distinct voice the questions I shall propose to you.

Candidates: We shall do so most willingly.

Parish Priest: Do you know what Catholic Action is and what it is to be enrolled in its ranks?

Candidates: Yes, Reverend Father, we have followed the instructions given to us and we are acquainted with the nature and aim of Catholic Action. By joining the Association we mean to be exemplary Christians and apostles among our brethren.

Parish Priest : Is it your sincere intention to promote the glory of God, to perfect yourselves and to work for the triumph of Christ our King in Society and of His Church Our Mother ?

Candidates : It is our earnest intention to better ourselves so as to be of edification to our neighbour, to spread the fragrance of Christ and to radiate Him everywhere ; and to work with all the energy at our disposal for His triumph and that of His Church.

Parish Priest : Do you promise to observe strictly the rules of the Association ?

Candidates : We promise to do so.

Parish Priest : May Christ Our King and Leader bless all your desires and keep you faithful to your promises.

In His Name I enrol you in His army and declare you active members of the Association of Catholic Action.

From henceforth you will wear the badge which I shall pin on you, and you will be allowed to present your card of enrolment which I shall also give you, testifying that you have been received in this great Association.

The Parish Priest then stands and blesses the badges saying :—

Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini.

Qui fecit coelum et terram.

Domine exaudi orationem meam.

Et clamor meus ad te veniat.

Dominus vobiscum.

Et cum spiritu tuo.

OREMUS

Omnipotens Deus, qui crucis signum pretioso Filii Tui sanguine dedicasti, quique per eamdem crucem mundum redimere voluisti, et per virtutem ejusdem venerabilis crucis humanum genus ad antiqui hostis chirographo liberasti, te suppliciter exoramus, ut digneris haec numismata paterna pietate bene + dicere, et coelestem eis virtutem et gratiam impertiri, ut quicumque ea in passionis et crucis Unigeniti tui signum ad tutelam corporis et animae super se gestaverint, coelestis gratiae plenitudinem in eis et munimen valeant tuae benedictionis accipere. Quemadmodum virgam Aaron rebellium perfidiam repellendam benedixisti : ita et haec signa Tua dextera bene + dic, et contra omnes diabolicas fraudes virtutem eis Tuae defensionis impende : ut portantibus illa animae pariter et corporis prosperitatem conferant salutarem, et spiritualia in eis dona multiplicent. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum — Amen.

The Parish Priest then sprinkles the badges with holy water saying :—

In nomine Patris, et Filii et Spiritus Sancti—Amen.

The Parish Priest then gives the badge and the card of enrolment to each candidate saying before to all :—

Receive this badge as the exterior sign of your enrolment into the Association and your adherence to its programme. Keep this card as the official recognition of your membership in the Association.

After giving the badges and the enrolment cards the Parish Priest adds:—

Now pledge yourselves reciting together with me the pledge of the Association:—

All: Deeply conscious of being not only members of the Church by Baptism but also Her champions by Confirmation, we fully adhere to the Statutes of Catholic Action and declare our determined intention to co-operate earnestly in the realization of its programme. We now do pledge, Our Pope, Our Bishop, and Our Priests: loyalty, obedience, and our best efforts, in the profession, the practice, the propagation and the defence of the Catholic Religion and hail Christ Our Shepherd and Our King.

All then sing: Christus vincit! Christus regnat! Christus imperat!!!

The Ceremony closes with the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

APPENDIX IV

THE BLESSING OF THE BANNER

Preliminaries:

When the banner has to be blessed and presented to the group, it is advisable to have a solemn ceremony either at a public meeting or in the Church, in the presence of the Congregation.

Order of the Ceremony:

(1) The hymn: "We Stand for God". (The banner is placed unfolded on the altar.)

(2) A short exhortation by the Ecclesiastical Assistant or other personality of the clergy.

(3) Blessing of the banner. (This is folded and held by the Secretary.)

The Parish Priest or another Ecclesiastic blesses the banner saying:—

Adjutorium nostrum in nomine Domini.

Qui fecit coelum et terram.

Dominus vobiscum.

Et cum spiritu tuo.

OREMUS

Domine Jesu Christe, cujus Ecclesia est veluti castrorum acies ordinata: bene + dic hoc vexillum; ut omnes sub eo tibi Domino Deo exercituum militantes, per intercessionem beati N. (vel beatae N.) inimicos suos visibiles et invisibiles in hoc saeculo superare, et

post victoriam in caelis triumphare mereantur. . .Per te, Jesu Christe: Qui vivis et regnas cum Deo Patre et Spiritu Sancto, in saecula saeculorum. — Amen.

(4) The Priest sprinkles the banner with holy water. He then takes it, and holding it in his hands he says:—

Receive this banner which is a sacred symbol of your Association and of its programme. Hold it always with honour, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

He hands it over to the President who passes it to the Banner-bearer of the Association.

All stand and sing: Christus vincit! Christus regnat!! Christus imperat!!!

The Pledge is recited by all and the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament closes the function.

APPENDIX V

INDULGENCES FOR CATHOLIC ACTION MEMBERS

In answer to a petition addressed to the Holy Father by the General President of the Italian Catholic Action movement, the Apostolic Penitentiary conceded (Rescript of 7th June, 1932), the following indulgences :

PARTIAL

300 days = to Ecclesiastical Assistants and Vice-Assistants of any grade for every apostolic work done to the benefit of Catholic Action ;

to Office-bearers and members when these :

(a) do something beneficial to Catholic Action, or take part in reunions, instructions and conferences of Catholic Action ;

(b) make at least a quarter of an hour's meditation every day.

100 days = to Office-bearers and members who wear during the day the distinctive mark of their particular organisations.

PLENARY

To Ecclesiastical Assistants and Vice-Assistants, Office-bearers and members, at the end of a retreat and courses of culture, propaganda, Diocesan meetings, provided that such courses close with a fitting religious ceremony, with Mass and Communion ;

To Office-bearers and propagandists, twice a month, if they hold and explain instructions or meetings in the parish or outside, at least twice a month, for Catholic Actionists;

To Office-bearers and members:

(1) On the day of aggregation or the renewal of the enrolment card;

(2) Once a month:

(a) at the close of the monthly recollection if they have taken part in it;

(b) if they have made at least a quarter of an hour's meditation every day, have gone to weekly confession, have received daily communion, have regularly attended the meetings of their own organisation.

(3) On the following Feasts:

Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, the Ascension, Corpus Christi, the Sacred Heart, Pentecost, St. Joseph, St. Peter the Apostle, St. Francis of Assisi, All Saints, the Holy Patrons of the single National organisations, each Patron of of each parochial Association;

(4) if they take part in suffrages offered for deceased Assistants, Office-bearers and members of Catholic Action.

20722